God and Grace in Philo and Paul

Orrey McFarland

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By

Orrey McFarland



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Abbreviations

All abbreviations of ancient literature, academic journals, and monograph series follow the forms indicated in the *SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006).

Introduction

> The idea of grace had been so much on my mind, grace as a sort of ecstatic fire that takes things down to essentials.[1]

> What could be more intriguing than to juxtapose the near-contemporaries Philo and Paul?[2]

1 The Aim of this Study

This study sets the apostle Paul in conversation with his Jewish near-contemporary Philo of Alexandria on the theme of divine and human grace.[3] The relationship between these two figures on the subject of grace has often been dictated by scholarly trends: either Paul speaks of grace and Philo does not, or both speak of grace without real difference. Yet, my argument, which will be explicated and defended in the exegesis offered in the following chapters, is that Paul and Philo both speak of God's gifts and of God as a gift-giver—that is, both stress divine grace—but they configure that grace differently; not antithetically, but differently. Thus, this work investigates what it might mean to say that two first-century figures such as Philo and Paul both thought of God's interactions with the world in terms of divine generosity—that they could both speak of divine gifts so frequently and in formally similar ways, while making materially different theological judgments in the context of their concrete historical settings and larger theological frameworks. It is precisely the similarities between, yet ultimate incommensurability of, Philo's and Paul's understandings of divine grace that constitutes both the promise and the problem of this study.

In this introduction, I will (1) briefly set forth how this comparison between Philo and Paul relates to larger scholarly trends on the relation between Judaism

1 M. Robinson, *Gilead* (London: Virago, 2005), 224.

2 D.T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1993), 66.

3 I use the word "grace" here as a synonym with "gift." These words will thus appear interchangeably to denote basic divine (and sometimes human) generosity. Any additional connotations (e.g. "undeserved grace") are contextually determined and are not built into χάρις as "grace." Furthermore, it should be noted that χάρις does not always mean "grace" and that this study is not on the word χάρις itself but on the concept of gift-giving; see further section 4.

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and early Christianity; (2) clarify how this study is positioned in relation to previous scholarship on the topic and thus what gap this work is intended to fill; (3) address methodological issues; and (4) provide an overview of the book.

2 Two Paradigms: Grace (or not) in Judaism and Christianity

It is not a secret that scholarly views on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity changed—or were, at least, significantly challenged—with the publication of E.P. Sanders' *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* in 1977.[4] The purpose of this section is not to chronicle pre- and post-Sanders scholarship; others have done that work well.[5] Rather, in broad strokes, I will describe the two dominant paradigms on Paul and Judaism that scholars have been rejecting, propounding, or nuancing for the last thirty-plus years. Ultimately, I will argue that neither of the paradigms are adequate for understanding the relationship of Philo to Paul, because both paradigms pre-define what grace is and must be for it to be present in a system of thought, thus placing Paul and Philo in an artificial relationship.[6]

2.1 *Paul and Grace, Judaism and not Grace*

The aim of Sanders' work was to "destroy" the view that Judaism—and especially Rabbinic Judaism—was legalistic, in antithesis to Christianity.[7] Following the work of Moore,[8] Sanders attributed the genesis of this antithetical approach to Weber.[9] Weber approached the Rabbinic writings with Protestant

4 E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

5 See S. Westerholm, "The 'New Perspective' at Twenty-Five," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume II, The Paradoxes of Paul* (ed. D.A. Carson et al.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 1–38 and J.D.G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 1–98.

6 The basic layout and questions of this section are in certain respects parallel to J.A. Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness in Wisdom of Solomon and Paul's Letter to the Romans: Texts in Conversation* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), chapter 1.

7 Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, xii.

8 G.F. Moore, "Christian Writers on Judaism," *HTR* 14 (1921): 197–254.

9 Cf. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 33. F. Weber, *Jüdische Theologie auf Grund des Talmud und Verwandter Schriften* (ed. F. Delitzsch and G. Schnedermann; 2nd ed.; Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1897).

categories.[10] For example, with regard to "Rechtfertigung" one can speak of "zwei Momente"—"daß der göttlichen Forderung Genüge geleistet worden sei, und daß man infolge dessen Anspruch auf Lohn habe."[11] In this schema, human "Pflichterfüllung" appears to be a "Gabe an Gott" and the reward or payment (Lohn) for the work as "Gottes Gegengabe."[12] God has ordered life so that his graciousness depends (abhängen) on prior human "Leistung." Consequently, "der Gnadenweg ist der außerordentliche."[13] Every salvific act of God has "zur Voraussetzung ein menschliches Verhalten."[14] This approach—where grace, as a reward, is a divine *response* to human *activity*—was used by many who followed Weber,[15] and it became a common understanding not only of Rabbinic Judaism but of Judaism *in toto*.[16] Grace responds to work, and *real* grace—without work—is außerordentlich.

Philo was also understood in this way.[17] Thus, Windisch could separate Philo's theology under two divergent headings. Under "Die Selbsterlösung," Windisch stated: "Die Frage ist nun die: kann der Mensch sich selbst lösen und reinigen, kann er sich selbst wieder zu Gott erheben? Es scheint, als setzte Philo diese Fähigkeit voraus und forderte einen Selbstaufschwung des Menschen."[18] Windisch is clear: "Es ist die Forderung der Bekehrung, die er erhebt, die Forderung der Selbsterlösung."[19] Philo's theology is thus defined by Selbstaufschwung, Selbsterlösung, Selbstreinigung.[20] Later, Windisch makes a different claim under "Die Gnadenerlösung:" "Die Erinnerung an die Massenhaftigkeit des menschlichen Schmutzes löst die Forderung der

10 Cf. Moore, "Christian Writers," 229: "The fundamental criticism to be made of Weber's 'System' is precisely that it is a system of theology, and not an ancient Jewish system but a modern German system . . . the system brings its logic with it and imposes it upon the materials."

11 Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, 277.

12 Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, 303.

13 Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, 304.

14 Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, 307.

15 E.g., W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (2nd ed.; Berlin: Reuther und Reichard, 1906).

16 A common example here is R. Bultmann.

17 Cf., e.g., Bousset, *Religion des Judentums*, 505.

18 H. Windisch, *Die Frömmigkeit Philos und ihre Bedeutung für das Christentum: Eine Religionsgeschichtliche Studie* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs Verlag, 1909), 10.

19 Windisch, *Frömmigkeit Philos*, 11.

20 Windisch thus makes the erroneous claim that "Völlig sündlos muß der Mensch geworden sein, der Gnade bei Gott finden will" (*Frömmigkeit Philos*, 12).

Selbstreinigung auf."[21] The paradoxical presentation of the contrasting yet simultaneously present viewpoints of Selbsterlösung and Gnadenerlösung—or rather, the ability to separate the two when reading Philo—is due to a Protestant framework, where grace is by definition separate from works and worth. There can be no deep coherence between these two Anschauungen; in their essence, they are antinomies because Gnadenerlösung should not contain any hint of Selbsterlösung. As Windisch noted, both Philo and Paul believed in Gnadenerfahrung, but Windisch cleanly separated Philo from Paul. The question is what should be stressed, "göttliche oder menschliche Kausalität?" Unfortunately, unlike Paul, "Diese Anschauung von einem Ineinander beider Kausalitäten ist Philo fremd; bei ihm schaffen entweder die Menschen oder die Kräfte Gottes."

Variations of this paradigm for understanding Philo still exist. Two examples will suffice. In his brief treatment of Abraham's election in Philo, VanLandingham notes how God's grace matches Abraham's worth; thus, he states: "Considering what 'grace' means, Philo's portrayal of Abraham's election cannot be characterized as such."[22] The implicit logic is that since we know (from Paul) that grace is given to humans despite their unworthiness—"freely"—then what Philo calls grace cannot actually be *grace*. Similarly, Carson argues that Philo has no concept of election by "sheer grace." Thus, when he explores why Noah "found favor (χάρις) before the Lord God" (Gen 6.8), it is because "he had attracted the 'grace' (*sic*) of God to him by his consistently righteous life."[23] The incredulous "*sic*" is revealing. Likewise, discussing Abraham's election, Carson states: "Here, 'elect' has almost certainly lost any overtones of grace. If Abraham is chosen it is because he is choice."[24] Since Philo affirms that grace goes to the worthy, he does "not reflect any of the discriminating, electing, transforming grace dominant in Paul. There is a graciousness to positive divine ultimacy that affects election not a whit."[25] Yet, as

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21 Windisch, *Frömmigkeit Philos*, 15–16. In this mode of thought, Philo "polemisiert . . . ausdrücklich gegen den Gedanken der Selbsterlösung und des Selbstaufschwunges" (20).

22 C. VanLandingham, *Judgment and Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006), 27.

23 D.A. Carson, "Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility in Philo: Analysis and Method," *NovT* 23 (1981): 160.

24 Carson, "Divine Sovereignty," 160.

25 Carson, "Divine Sovereignty," 161. Carson refrains from attributing to Philo a "merit theology." Whether or not merit is a problematic concept, it is often used as a value judgment against Judaism, and it does not do justice to Philo. For an interesting discussion of merit in relation to grace, see J.P. Wawrykow, *God's Grace & Human Action: "Merit" in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame: UND Press, 1995).

we will see, that is precisely what Philo, on his terms, thought election was: gracious *and* discriminating. To place a *sic* next to Philo's statements about grace is to place a *sic* over the whole Philonic corpus. Accordingly, where Windisch found an irreconcilable tension between grace and works in Philo, others have nearly denied Philo the use of the concept of grace.

Consequently, scholars in this paradigm work with presupposed definitions and logic. Judaism in general, and Philo in particular, are measured according to Paul's understanding of grace apart from works and worth.[26] The tendency is thus to delimit grace to something nearing its Pauline expression. Therefore, one either cannot find grace in a thinker such as Philo, or if one can, it is impossible to make proper connections to other aspects of his thought.

2.2 *Paul and Grace, Judaism and the Same Grace*

In contrast to the first paradigm, Sanders argued that what characterized Palestinian Judaism was "covenantal nomism," where "obedience maintains one's position in the covenant, but it does not earn God's grace as such."[27] Human works are in response to God's prior grace in election, rather than God's grace being in response to human works. To quote Sanders:

> the perception of God's grace and the requirement of obedience . . . indicates that 'grace' and 'works' were not considered as opposed to each other in any way . . . the notion that God's grace is in any way contradictory to human endeavour is totally foreign to Palestinian Judaism. The reason for this is that grace and works were not considered alternative roads to salvation. Salvation . . . is always by the grace of God, embodied in the covenant. The terms of the covenant, however, require obedience.[28]

Sanders' distinction between "getting in" the covenant by grace, but "staying in" through obedience, such that all obedience occurs within a context of grace, was a salutary, if ultimately deficient, corrective in the study of Judaism. Grace and works are not in tension, but neither are they allowed to be configured in relation to one another such that both contribute to salvation. Reading Jewish texts within this framework, Sanders maintained that "the gift and demand of

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26 Cf. the early warning of H. Chadwick, "St. Paul and Philo of Alexandria," *BJRL* 48 (1966): 300.

27 Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 420; cf. 422. See also E.P. Sanders, "Judaism and the Grand 'Christian' Abstractions: Love, Mercy, and Grace," *Interp* 39 (1985): 357–72.

28 Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 297.

God were kept in a healthy relationship with each other."[29] Accordingly, "on the point at which many have found the decisive contrast between Paul and Judaism—grace and works—Paul is in agreement with Palestinian Judaism."[30] Whereas the scholars in the first paradigm saw grace in Paul, but could not see Pauline grace in Judaism, Sanders saw the same grace in both.

Sanders' argument was subsequently developed by other scholars, and the view that Judaism and Paul believed in grace "equally" has become a standard opinion among many.[31] For example, the judgment of Dunn: "The Judaism of what Sanders christened as 'covenantal nomism' can now be seen to preach good Protestant doctrine: that grace is always prior; that human effort is ever the response to divine initiative; that good works are the fruit and not the root of salvation."[32] The question for Dunn, then, has little to do with Judaism; rather, now that Judaism has been salvaged, "where does that leave Paul?" Against what was Paul arguing in a letter such as Galatians, if no Jews believed in something like justification by works? The typical answer to this question within this paradigm is that Paul's target was some form of ethnocentrism.[33] As Wright states, justification by faith is "a polemical doctrine, whose target is not the usual Lutheran one of 'nomism' or '*Menschenwerke*,' but the Pauline one of Jewish national pride."[34] The various scholars who work within this

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29 Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 427.

30 Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 543.

31 As Sanders would point out, there were also significant precursors to his work: e.g., W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: SPCK, 1948). For works that have sought to support Sanders' appraisal of Judaism, see, e.g., D.B. Garlington, *"The Obedience of Faith": A Pauline Phrase in Historical Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991); K.L. Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999). T. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 14 presupposes Sanders' basic argument.

The critique of Sanders' reading of Judaism has also been significant and helpful in many regards; cf. S.J. Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1–5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); M.A. Seifrid, *Justification by Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme* (Leiden: Brill, 1992); F. Avemarie, *Tora und Leben: Untersuchungen zur Heilsbedeutung der Tora in der frühen Rabbinischen Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996); and the essays in D.A. Carson, P.T. O'Brien, and M.A. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 1, The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001).

32 J.D.G. Dunn, "The Justice of God: A Renewed Perspective on Justification by Faith," *JTS* 43 (1992): 8.

33 See, e.g., N.T. Wright, "The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith," *TynB* 29 (1978): 61–88; J.D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

34 Wright, "Paul of History," 71.

"New Perspective" disagree on many things, but their basic agreement is that Sanders got something fundamentally right: Judaism is a religion of grace, and therefore Paul's problem with Judaism could not have been a lack of grace.

Sanders made little use of Philo (his book was large enough already), and the brief comparison he did draw between Philo and Paul focused largely on the dissimilarity of their understandings of the human predicament.[35] Since Sanders, few have explored Philo's understanding of grace,[36] perhaps because it is assumed that the question of grace in Judaism has been settled, or because Philo can at times appear to be an *odd* Jew whose writings are not helpful for understanding Paul,[37] a view which still rests on an older argument that made strong distinctions between Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism.[38] Indeed, the sheer volume of Philo's writings alone makes him (counter-intuitively) easy to overlook. Yet the *why* of Philo's absence is not as important here as the fact of his absence.

As already noted, correcting the view that Judaism was a religion of some sort of thoughtless works-righteousness, devoid of grace, was a healthy step for scholarship. Within this paradigm, Judaism is founded on divine grace, because one enters the people of God solely through God's grace, which is not merited by works; works are only a condition of staying in the family. Consequently, one can find grace in Judaism because it is "free," "unmerited," "unconditional." That is, for the post-Sanders paradigm, just as for the pre-Sanders paradigm, grace is defined to the exclusion of human action or worth. As different as the two paradigms are, they are fundamentally identical in the definition of grace: the question is still, can we find *this grace* in Judaism? In this way, the post-Sanders interpretive stream found a temporary solution to the problem (e.g.

35 Cf. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 552–56. Sanders had planned a project comparing the "pious practices" of the rabbis and Philo before he wrote *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*; cf. E.P. Sanders, "Comparing Judaism and Christianity: An Academic Autobiography," in *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders* (ed. F.E. Udoh et al.; Notre Dame: UND Press, 2008), 17. Sanders ends that piece: "I continue to hope for more and better comparative studies. They are not all that easy, but they are an awful lot of fun" (33).

36 Though I will discuss below those that have; see section 3.2.

37 Cf., for example, Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting?*, 29: "... in the current climate, the use of Philo by the last generation of Pauline scholars ... has given way to a more skeptical view of Philo's value for understanding Paul's view of faith and justification."

38 The obligatory reference here is M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus: Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2. Jahrhunderts vor Christus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1969), which showed that the distinction is problematic.

that Judaism is not legalistic); but ultimately it only reframed the problem, because it did not break out of inherited concepts and definitions.[39]

2.3 *Conclusion: The Assumed Quantity and Missing Particularity*

Both of the paradigms above have valuable insights. The first paradigm is right to emphasize the particularity of the Pauline understanding of grace, though their method for doing so is dubious; the second paradigm is correct to emphasize that both Judaism and Christianity had developed understandings of grace, though they do so at the expense of the particularities of different figures and writings in Judaism (and the particularity of Paul, as well). Consequently, what hampers both paradigms is an essentialist view of grace, which defines grace by Paul and then uses that definition to measure Judaism– and then, rather circularly, reads Paul in light of Judaism. There has been little room for seeing *different kinds* of grace—that is, different gifts and configurations of grace—in Paul and Judaism.[40] Grace, then, is an assumed quantity and the potential particularity of thought in each corpus is missing. I hope to show that a break from such essentialist logic—grace is *this*—is necessary by exploring how the specific individuals Paul and Philo define grace and configure it in relation to works, worth, etc. by placing grace in a larger context for each.

Against the post-Sanders paradigm, I will contend that we twist Philo's thought if we turn him into a Protestant; his theology, understandably, hangs together in a decidedly unProtestant way.[41] Yet, against the pre-Sanders paradigm, we do equal damage to Philo's thought if we deny him the concept of grace outright or make it an inconsistent facet of his writings. Philo, just like Paul, had a robust sense of God's generosity towards the world. Yet, even if both figures speak of divine grace, I contend that that in itself tells us very

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39 Thus, the early critique of Sanders by J. Neusner, "The Use of Later Rabbinic Evidence for the Study of Paul," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism, Volume II* (ed. W.S. Green; Chicago: Scholars Press, 1980), 50 that Sanders forced "questions of Pauline-Lutheran theology, important to Sanders and New Testament scholarship" upon the Jewish texts.

40 The missing particularity perhaps stems from an older view of God's grace as "graciousness," a disposition of favour towards humanity. For a critique of this view, see R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament, Volume 1* (trans. K. Grobel; London: SCM Press, 1956), 288–92.

41 Conversely, note also S. Westerholm, "Law, Grace and the 'Soteriology' of Judaism," in *Law in Religious Communities in the Roman Period: The Debate Over Torah and Nomos in Post-Biblical Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. P. Richardson and S. Westerholm; Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier, 1991), 71–72: "Paul's writings are misused when their theological nature is overlooked and he is thought to be depicting, rightly or wrongly, soteriology as understood by contemporary Jews themselves."

little; rather, the particularity of their thought on divine grace is key and it is that particularity which demonstrates the insufficiencies of both paradigms. Through comparing the fundamental theological grammar of both figures, my intention is to raise new questions and interpretations of both Paul and Philo by themselves and in relation to one another. Philo's and Paul's understandings of divine grace are neither antithetical nor identical, and a comparison between the two is interesting precisely because they are comparable but *different*.[42]

3 A Brief History of Scholarship

Grace has been and remains one of those topics that almost every study of Paul touches on briefly, but the amount of scholarship dedicated explicitly to exploring grace in Paul, as well as Philo, is rather small. Here we may note two groups of literature and representative studies of each: 1) anthropological, philosophical, and classical studies on gift-giving; and 2) comparative studies on Philo and Paul, and particularly those on grace in Philo and Paul.

3.1 *"The Gift"*

Since the publication of Mauss' seminal work *The Gift* in 1925, anthropological and classical studies of gift-giving have flourished.[43] One of Mauss' key insights was that gifts compel reciprocity; since gifts build and further relationships, a gift that "does nothing to enhance solidarity is a contradiction."[44] Thus, there is no "free gift," because all gifts expect a return. Mauss' work stood as a corrective to the study of Malinowski, who conducted his study on gift-giving with a distinction between gift-giving (free, with no obligation to return) and

42 Thus, as Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness*, 10 states, "theologies of grace should not be compared based on degree—what text emphasises grace more—but must ask after definition."

43 M. Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (trans. W.D. Halls; London: Routledge, 1990). For an extensive discussion of this field of study, see J.M.G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), chapter 1. The work of Mauss and others mentioned in this section will not appear explicitly throughout this work; I mention them here, instead, because they demonstrate the interest in the modern conversation on gift-giving, they put pressure on presuppositions about gift concepts, they clearly outline the common features of gift-giving and reciprocity, and they raise important questions for our study.

44 M. Douglas, "Foreword," in *The Gift* (London: Routledge, 1990), vii.

commerce (calculated giving and return).[45] For Mauss, such a distinction made no sense of his ethnographical observations: gifts are never separable from their giver, and to receive the other in the gift requires a counter-gift.[46] Gifts create and sustain social bonds, and to refuse to reciprocate means not only a loss of honor, but also of relations. Mauss thus set a trend of attempting to define gift-giving as it functions within particular contexts and without the baggage of cultural assumptions about gifts: the ever-present key elements were the obligations to give, to receive, and to reciprocate. It is not that every form of social exchange is gift-giving;[47] but rather, gift-exchange was a more pervasive, and less self-contained, aspect of the cultures Mauss explored.[48] Furthermore, as Sahlins then demonstrated, different kinds of exchange were restricted to different kinds of people with whom one desired different kinds of relations.[49] Since gifts set one in relation with another, one needed to be careful to give to particular people, for particular ends/relations. Indiscriminate gift-giving is unwise gift-giving.

Mauss' work has been much debated and developed since it first came out.[50] The critique by Derrida is noteworthy here, because it stands as an interesting bridge between anthropological-philosophical studies of gift-giving and the work of biblical scholars noted above. Derrida's response to Mauss' work was that it "speaks of everything but the gift: It deals with economy, exchange, contract."[51] Mauss was not determining what a gift is, but rather how the word "gift" is used. For Derrida, Mauss' account of gift-giving implied a circular economy, whereas, in his view, a gift was supposed to "keep a relation of foreignness to the circle," to disrupt the circle and any form of symmetry, and thus be aneconomic.[52] A gift is not impossible—rather, in a typically Derridean statement, it is "the very figure of the impossible."[53] For a gift to be a gift it

45 B. Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (London: Routledge, 1922).

46 See, e.g., Mauss, *The Gift*, 10–14.

47 See, for example, the distinction Philo makes between giving and selling in chapter 1, section 3.1.1.

48 Mauss, *The Gift*, 28–29.

49 M. Sahlins, *Stone-Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton Press, 1972), 193–95.

50 See esp. the essays in A.D. Schrift, ed., *The Logic of the Gift: Towards an Ethic of Generosity* (New York: Routledge, 1997); M. Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift* (trans. N. Scott; Oxford: Polity Press, 1999).

51 J. Derrida, "The Time of the King," in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity* (ed. A.D. Schrift; London: Routledge, 1997), 138.

52 Derrida, "Time," 124.

53 J. Derrida, *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money* (trans. P. Kamuf; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992), 7.

cannot be known as such; neither giver nor recipient can know the object as gift, since that could cause feelings of gratitude or debt, consequently nullifying the gift. Thus, there must be a forgetting of the gift by both parties, yet not only a forgetting of the gift, but also a forgetting of forgetting—effectively, the death of the giver is necessary.[54] Derrida's reaction to Mauss is parallel to the reaction of Carson to χάρις in Philo: as Carson places a *sic* against Philo's gift, so Derrida does for Mauss. But here again, it is arbitrary to pre-define what a gift is against all evidence for how (what most humans consider to be) gifts actually function.[55]

What one sees from studies such as Mauss, and the conversation that has followed him, is that gift-giving is not typically a "disinterested" activity, where "free" gifts are given to individuals or groups who are undeserving; on the contrary, givers are very interested in the identity of the gift-recipient, gifts are given for particular purposes, with particular expectations that hinge on the quality of the recipient and the obligations inherent to the gift-exchange. The value of these studies, for our purposes, is both the questions and concepts these studies provide and the specific focus on studying gift-giving within discrete contexts—of making context paramount for diverse configurations of grace.

With regard to gift-exchange in the Greco-Roman world, the literature is vast: for example, on gift-exchange in Greece,[56] or Roman benefaction and patron-client relationships.[57] These studies largely confirm the basic points of the anthropological studies: one should give carefully, gifts expect reciprocation either materially or through gratitude, and so forth. All of these studies—some

54 Derrida, "Time," 132–33. See further J. Derrida, *The Gift of Death* (trans. D. Willis; London: University of Chicago, 1995).

55 Further, as J. Milbank, "Can a Gift Be Given? Prolegomena to a Future Trinitarian Metaphysic," *MT* 11 (1995): 130 has argued, there is an underlying assumption of a Kantian distinction between duty and desire where the purity of the gift is what determines whether it is a gift. As with merit, there is nothing wrong with Kant; but this distinction, when applied to gift-giving, envisages a kind of human that cannot be proved ever to have existed.

56 C. Gill, N. Postlethwaite, and R. Seaford, eds., *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (Oxford: OUP, 1998); S. von Reden, *Exchange in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1995).

57 R.P. Saller, *Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982); A. Wallace-Hadrill, ed., *Patronage in Ancient Society* (London: Routledge, 1989); F.W. Danker, *Benefactor. Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton, 1982); also the classic work of P. Veyne, *Bread and Circuses* (trans. B. Pearce; London: Penguin, 1990). The relationship between benefaction and patronage, is debated; I list them together here, as largely Roman forms of gift-exchange, for simplicity.

more directly than others—sketch the environment in which Philo and Paul discussed divine gift-giving. Thus, around the time of Paul and Philo we can see the common rules and understanding of ancient gift-giving epitomized and explored in a work like Seneca's *De Beneficiis*. The ancient world—particularly philosophers and those who had means—reflected on the problems, possibilities, and power of gift-giving. We should assume first that Philo and Paul reflect the ideas of their time rather than assuming that they do not; if they prove otherwise, then that is significant and should be explored. What these studies profitably do for us, though, is show what was typical of ancient gift-exchange. Additionally, they call into question many of our presuppositions about what a gift is and how gift-giving should work. All of these tools can be used in this study, and the focus on gift-giving in these fields gives support for such a study.

3.2 *Philo and Paul*

There are enough similarities between the writings of Philo and Paul that comparisons of their thought, or dependency claims of one on the other, are numerous.[58] With a corpus as large as Philo's, the possibility for overlap of any kind is high.[59] The repeated juxtaposition of Philo and Paul is significant because it betrays a belief that Philo and Paul are worth juxtaposing and it shows interest in such study. Yet work that tries to prove dependency of Paul on Philo, or tries to find echoes of Philo in Paul's letters, is tangential to the focus here.[60] Rather, what we will look at below are a handful of studies that

58 To avoid needlessly inflating footnotes, I will point to the discussion and literature cited in Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 66–74; F. Siegert, "Philo and the New Testament," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (ed. A. Kamesar; Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 183–91. Reviews of scholarship on Philo can be found in: P. Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria: a Critical and Synthetical Survey of Research Since World War II," in *ANRW 2.21* (*Hellenistisches Judentum in Römischer Zeit: Philon und Josephus*) (ed. W. Haase; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 233–82; D.T. Runia and R. Radice, *Philo of Alexandria: An Annotated Bibliography 1937–1986* (Leiden: Brill, 1992); D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: An Annotated Bibliography 1987–1996, with Addenda for 1937–1986* (Leiden: Brill, 2000). D.T. Runia, *Philo: An Annotated Bibliography 1997–2006 with Addenda for 1987–1996* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

59 For an early catalogue of parallels, see Chadwick, "Paul and Philo."

60 Note S. Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 (1962): 2: "Abstractly, Qumran might have influenced the NT, or abstractly, it might not have, . . . or Philo Paul. The issue for the student is not the abstraction but the specific. Detailed study is the criterion, and the detailed study ought to respect the context and not be limited to juxtaposing mere excerpts. Two passages may sound the same in splendid isolation from their context, but when seen in context reflect difference rather than similarity."

have explored the topic of grace in Philo and Paul, as well as those that have compared Philo and Paul to gain a clearer grasp of the two figures themselves.

The early work of Moffatt explored the dynamics of grace in both Philo and Paul.[61] Moffatt is one of the few pre-Sanders works that places a strong emphasis on the importance of grace in Philo's thought.[62] However, Moffat's treatment of Philo was quite short,[63] and his comparisons of Philo and Paul even shorter, and were, despite Moffat's charitable reading of Philo, still prone to measuring Philo against Christian theology.[64] Additionally, Moffat raised an ostensible problematic in Philo's thought—"Grace comes freely to any man . . . and yet somehow the reception of it does depend upon a certain capacity"—that he believed Philo left unresolved. However, as I will seek to show, this "ultimate myster[y] of religion" is not in fact so mysterious.[65]

The closest work to this study is Zeller's *Charis bei Philon und Paulus*.[66] Zeller's work is what the title suggests—a focused comparison of Philo and Paul on grace. Zeller makes the distinction that for Philo, the place where grace is experienced is "die Welt als Schöpfung Gottes," a kind of "ontologische Gnade," while for Paul God's grace is bound up with "die an den endgeschichtlichen Kairos des Kreuzesgeschehens."[67] This leads to very different explicating systems for divine grace: for Philo, grace in creation establishes a "Wohltätigkeitsethik" which determines how gifts are given, most often "an die Würdigen."[68] By contrast, the "Heilsgeschehen" that is Christ's death and resurrection establishes a disjunction between faith/grace and works. Grace thus

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61 See also the works of G.P. Wetter, *Charis: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des ältesten Christentums* (Leipzig: Druck von O. Brandstetter, 1913) and J. Wobbe, *Der Charis-Gedanke bei Paulus: Ein Beitrag zur neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Münster, 1932). A more thematic work is M. Theobald, *Die Überströmende Gnade: Studien zu einem Paulinischen Motivfeld* (Würzburg, 1982), which focuses on the theme of "superabundance" in Paul. Cf. also the more recent B. Eastman, *The Significance of Grace in the Letters of Paul* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), which looks at grace throughout Paul's letters under broad headings like "Dependence on God" and "Human Responsibility."

62 E.g., J. Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1931), 47: "Nothing is more characteristic of Philo than this emphasis upon the grace of God." Note also H.A.A. Kennedy, *Philo's Contribution to Religion* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919).

63 Moffatt, *Grace*, 45–51.

64 For example, Moffatt, *Grace*, 45 states that "Philo's transcendentalism prevented him from realizing that God could give Himself to men."

65 Moffatt, *Grace*, 49. Cf. also É. Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie* (2nd ed.; Paris, 1925), 278.

66 D. Zeller, *Charis bei Philon und Paulus* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990).

67 Zeller, *Charis*, 197 and 36.

68 Zeller, *Charis*, 198.

comes "gerade dem Sünder," not according to any ethic. Zeller's study is very helpful, and I have no desire to disparage any of its contents to make space for my own work; rather, I believe my work will both complement and develop Zeller's (though there will also be differences in argument and, especially, of emphasis).[69] Nevertheless, there are at least two reasons why this study is justified in the light of Zeller's work. First, although it was written in 1990, Zeller makes no mention of the New Perspective, which is a strange omission. On a related note, Zeller's study is now over twenty years old, and although there should be no prejudice against aging works, scholarship on Philo, Paul, and gift-giving have advanced since then. Second, and more important, is that Zeller's work is quite brief, with a significant amount of space devoted to grace in antiquity, Greek-speaking Judaism, pre- and post-Pauline NT traditions, as well as considerations of what traditions may have influenced Philo or Paul (e.g. Philo and the wisdom tradition). Consequently, the resulting space to set forth both Philo and Paul on grace, and to put them in conversation, is limited; sustained exegesis of individual texts, especially for Philo, is therefore also limited. Setting the ancient context for Philo and Paul is important, but it often precludes more extensive engagement with the authors themselves. Thus, while Zeller's book is commendable, plenty of work—and nuancing—on this topic is still required.

Studies by Watson and Barclay have also sought to place Philo and Paul in conversation.[70] Watson's study is focused "on a single point: the fact that Paul and his fellow-Jews read the same texts, yet read them differently."[71] Watson thus seeks to set a "three-way conversation" between the biblical text, Paul, and a fellow Second Temple figure such as Philo. Watson's approach both enables dialogue between the different figures and thus also illuminates their dissimilar hermeneutical practices. For example, in their readings of the Abraham story in Genesis, Philo believes "Abraham not only observed the law," but also his "acts of obedience are heightened and celebrated, and actions about

69 For example, I place more emphasis on why and how exactly Paul and Philo differ on their understandings of God's gifts to the worthy/unworthy; see the brief discussion in Zeller, *Charis*, 65–72. Additionally, I would challenge Zeller's assertion that the "Gratuität" of Paul's understanding of grace is "weit radikaler als Philon."

70 The relation of my project to that of Watson and Barclay is, again, similar to Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness*, which is a parallel project. The differences stem from the fact that Linebaugh is comparing Paul with *Wisdom*, not Philo; and more specifically, he is comparing Romans with *Wisdom*, whereas I will be using all of Paul's letters. The different comparison partners and thus fields of analysis raise different questions and place the emphasis in different areas.

71 F. Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), ix.

which questions might be raised are rewritten to ensure that such questions are not raised." By contrast, Paul takes "Genesis 15.6 at face value: Abraham's righteousness is constituted merely by his acceptance of God's promise to act on his behalf."[72] Or in their readings of Exodus, Philo displays an "enlightened humanism" in which the Law provides a "framework capable of comprehending human life in its entirety," while Paul revels in "paradox," the fact that there is a "fundamental contrast between the old [order] and new."[73] For Watson, then, Philo and Paul read scripture in remarkably divergent ways. What cannot be fully addressed—though Watson does provide direction—is the *why* of Philo's and Paul's dissimilar readings of the same texts; nor is there a direct focus on grace.

Two studies by Barclay address that question quite specifically, yet are restricted in scope and length.[74] For example, Barclay compares Philo's *Leg*. 3.65–106 with Romans 9 to determine "as precisely as possible in what respects Paul's theology of grace was radical and of such revolutionary potential for later interpreters."[75] Noting the discrepancies between Philo's God, who acts in giving to uphold a moral order, and Paul's God, whose gift disrupts precisely that order, Barclay summarizes: "the issue between Paul and this particular Jewish contemporary is not whether God acts in grace, but whether it is either possible or helpful to think that God acted in grace in Christ in a way that went beyond reason and surpassed systems of 'worth.' "[76] In a similar study, Barclay examines the relationship between divine and human agency in relation to grace.[77] Accordingly, Barclay traces how grace drives Philo's understanding of human virtue, and how for Paul the Christ-event is the supreme act of grace that reconstitutes human agency. Here Barclay notes that deciding which of the two have a more radical notion of grace would be fruitless; both press the priority of divine grace to such an extent where, for Philo, human action seems unnecessary or illusory, and for Paul, divine election makes

72 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 268.

73 Watson, *Hermeneutics of Faith*, 312–13.

74 The treatment of Philo in Barclay, *Gift*, which was released while this book was at press, dovetails with the emphases here.

75 J.M.G. Barclay, "Grace Within and Beyond Reason: Philo and Paul in Dialogue," in *Paul, Grace and Freedom: Essays in Honour of John K. Riches* (ed. P. Middleton et al.; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 9.

76 Barclay, "Grace Within and Beyond," 20.

77 J.M.G. Barclay, "'By the Grace of God I Am What I Am': Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul," in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment* (ed. J.M.G. Barclay and S.J. Gathercole; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 140–57.

God seem "willfully arbitrary."[78] Barclay presses the point that Philo's and Paul's understandings of grace are in many ways similar, but the "theological framework[s] in which they place this grace" are quite different. In each study, the smaller field of investigation is argued to be indicative of Philo's and Paul's larger theologies, and Barclay repeatedly stresses that what separates Philo and Paul is precisely the differing particularities of grace. Barclay's work thus signals the opportunity for a project that places Philo and Paul in conversation on grace more comprehensively, which can more fully probe into the argumentative logic and similarity-in-contrast between these two figures.

A final set of studies that should be mentioned are those that set Paul's understanding of grace within the context of ancient benefaction. The most helpful and relevant work in this category is that of Harrison.[79] Harrison's thesis is that "the Graeco-Roman *benefaction* context of χάρις is the backdrop for Paul's understanding of divine and human grace."[80] Harrison is thorough both in his overview of literature on the topic and also, more impressively, in his extensive treatment of χάρις throughout the ancient world; he examines the inscriptions, papyri, Jewish literature (Philo included),[81] and the ancient philosophers, before turning to Paul. Thus engaging a vast amount of historical evidence, Harrison is successful in painting a rich, multifaceted context for understanding Paul, for which all scholars should be grateful. But his work is not without its issues. First, Harrison regularly identifies—or perhaps, confuses—discussions of context and influence with the interpretation of texts. That is, when Harrison turns to a Pauline text, the discussion of that Pauline text is typically overwhelmed by discussions of potential background topics, with the Pauline text itself receiving little direct attention. Accordingly, the value of Harrison's study is in his historical work, not in close readings of the Pauline texts themselves.

Second, Harrison's work tries to prove, or assumes, a spectrum, particularly from the inscriptions to Philo (and Josephus) and finally to Paul, where gift-giving is more and more purified from reciprocity. In the first-century, as

78 Cf. Barclay, "Grace and Agency," 156–57.

79 J.R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in Its Graeco-Roman Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003). Note also Z.A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004); S. Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor: Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000). A helpful overview is D.A. DeSilva, "Patronage and Reciprocity: The Context of Grace in the New Testament," *ATJ* 31 (1999): 32–84.

80 Harrison, *Grace*, 1.

81 See Harrison, *Grace*, 114–33.

attested especially by the inscriptions, we see an "ethos of reciprocity," in which there is a constant giving and receiving, a bond between human relations and relations with the gods that demands gratitude and counter-gifts.[82] However, in Philo we see a critique of gift-giving in its benefaction context (e.g. *Cher.* 122–123).[83] Thus, "Philo's understanding of χάρις and the ethos of reciprocity is largely typical of his times, with the exception of his stronger emphasis on the unilateral nature of divine grace."[84] Further, "Paul's emphasis on the unilateral nature of grace was directed against the idea that God was compelled by acts of human piety to reciprocate beneficently."[85] In a move parallel to Derrida's concern to uphold the (modern) concept of a "pure," non-reciprocal gift, Harrison asks why Paul would use χάρις, which could possibly misrepresent "God's unilateral grace as some type of reciprocal contract?"[86] Paul could be overturning the *do ut des* sensibilities of ancient benefaction or the idea that humans can properly requite God's generosity. Harrison even believes it possible that Paul used χάρις instead of ἔλεος because the Hebrew חן perhaps "better preserved for Paul the nuance of a unilateral transaction," as opposed to חסד, which might have an "overtone of reciprocity."[87]

It is strange that Harrison is at such pains to paint Paul's context and to say that he is best understood within that context, only then to assert that he does not really fit on one of its most central aspects.[88] While I have no problem with arguing that Paul sometimes sits awkwardly in his context (and we will see that, occasionally, he does) or that he would have had issues with many facets of Graeco-Roman gift-giving, the problem here is the word "unilateral." It is true that neither Philo nor Paul espouse some sort of crude *do ut des*, nor is the

82 See throughout Harrison, *Grace*, 26–96.

83 I read this text somewhat differently than Harrison; see chapter 5, section 4.1.

84 Harrison, *Grace*, 133.

85 Harrison, *Grace*, 18.

86 Harrison, *Grace*, 35. See also 284.

87 Harrison, *Grace*, 286–87. Some scholars have questioned whether Graeco-Roman benefaction is the proper backdrop for Paul; for example, C. Breytenbach, *Grace, Reconciliation, Concord: The Death of Christ in Graeco-Roman Metaphors* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 207–38 unconvincingly argues that "Paul's notion of the χάρις of God has its foundation in this important and influential biblical tradition, and not in the benefactor ideology of the Roman Empire" (226). Ancient benefaction only "provides the metaphor" for Paul's understanding of divine mercy. The notion that χάρις and ἔλεος can be conceptually distinguished such that one can, essentially, stand for Graeco-Roman benefaction and the other for a Jewish understanding of God is suspect.

88 Harrison, *Grace*, 285 even notes that divine grace "animates and impels human beneficence," which is "highly unusual in Graeco-Roman religion."

process of reciprocity mechanical; but is it possible that both Philo and Paul construe the motivations, manners, and ends of reciprocity differently than most in their contexts, while still fitting their context just fine? There is no need to "purify" Philo's and Paul's understandings of gift-giving.

A final point of critique—directed more at Crook than Harrison—is important for this work. Both scholars see part of their duty as peeling off the traditional theological significance of grace by focusing on Paul's understanding of grace within the Graeco-Roman world of gift-exchange. For Harrison, past studies are dogged by the double-problem of being too theological, of using "abstract ideological categories," while also lacking proper historical rigor.[89] Scholars have made grace a timeless construct and have not therefore let theological questions arise organically from Paul's own concerns.[90] Similarly, for Crook, the problem is "theological χάρις," which emphasizes that grace is for sinners, in relation to justification, forgiveness, and so forth, all of which "likely has more to do with the result of centuries of Christian handling of the term" rather than a reading of Paul as one who received an unrequested benefaction from his divine patron.[91] The first problem, of course, is that "theological χάρις" is the result of even a cursory reading of Paul, not of absorbing post-Reformation dogmatics. Any theologizing that cannot be explained, for example, by the picture of ancient benefaction system that Crook constructs is to be avoided as theological distortion. Yet, by de-theologizing the texts, Crook essentially boils Paul down to the lowest common denominator: standard patron-client relationships.[92] Thus, what he cannot do is handle the particularity of Paul. We need not proclaim Paul to be *sui generis* in all his thought; yet, while some theological interpreters certainly do over-read theology into terms ("free gift," etc.), they are at least trying to make sense of the particularity of Paul's vision.

The historical context of Paul's letters (or Philo's treatises) is illuminating, but it can also serve as a straightjacket to determine what Paul can say. There is always a danger of both contextual, as well as theological, over-determination. Accordingly, we must start and finish with the texts themselves, whose own logics are our first concern.

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89 J.R. Harrison, "Paul, Theologian of Electing Grace," in *Paul and His Theology* (ed. S.E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 107. Cf. Harrison, *Grace*, 8–13.

90 Harrison, *Grace*, 8–13; Harrison, "Theologian of Electing Grace," 79–80.

91 Crook, *Conversion*, 164.

92 Cf. Crook, *Conversion*, 193.

None of these critiques are meant to deny the real contribution of, especially, Harrison's book; rather, I want to emphasize precisely where it is significant. Informed by Harrison's excellent historical work, I will argue that the theology of Paul's understanding of gift needs to be reopened by proceeding with a historically-informed theological study, in conversation with Philo. In the following pages, we will not leave historical work behind; as I have already stated, I believe Philo and Paul make the most sense as first-century figures. But as Paul was a historical figure who employed the concept of grace within his historical context, it had meaning for him historically and socially insofar as it was theologically interpreted.

3.3 *Summary and Prospect*

In sections two and three we have seen how, because of either theological or historical/contextual presuppositions, much of scholarship has placed Philo and Paul into a strained relationship of either identity or antithesis. What these earlier historical and theological studies invite, therefore, is a deeper and more focused study of the Philonic and Pauline texts both in themselves and also in relation to one another. That is, there is still plenty of room for a full, nuanced comparison of grace in Philo and Paul, and my intention is to build on these earlier studies with the hope of advancing the conversation.[93] If either identity or antithesis have been the options for understanding the relationship of Philo to Paul—they are either fully compatible or fully incompatible on the question of grace—the purpose of this study is to use Philo and Paul as paradigm-cases for a comparison where grace, for both individuals, is both *emphatic* and *different*. Thus, I will seek to chart new terrain between identity and antithesis, which will call into question many of the presuppositions of earlier studies on the relationship of Paul and Judaism (both Old and New Perspectives), as well as historical and theological studies on grace which assume that "grace" is a static concept.

Accordingly, throughout the following chapters we must ask both Philo and Paul: why does God give gifts and what gifts does God give? To whom are these gifts given and what results from receiving them?

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93 There are other works related to financial matters in Paul that are important, but not wholly relevant for this study; see P. Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987); G.W. Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi: Conventions of Gift-Exchange and Christian Giving* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997); and now esp. D.E. Briones, *Paul's Financial Policy: A Socio-Theological Approach* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

4 Methodological Issues

Although I believe the following chapters will substantiate why Philo is a valid object of study in himself and for comparison with Paul, the relative absence of Philo from discussions of Paul and Judaism both gives space for such an investigation of Philo but also calls it into question.[94] Two main reasons can justify the presence of Philo here.

First, as noted above, Philo has often suffered from being considered anything other than what he was: a diaspora Jew. As Boccaccini notes, many have approached Philo with "historically determined prejudices" that he fits best with the Church Fathers or Greek philosophers, but not with "the culture and faith of his people in his time."[95] Yet, as Boccaccini also notes, the simple biographical facts of Philo's life suffice to prove his Jewish credentials.[96] Additionally, recent studies have addressed the issue of Philo's Jewish identity, arguing that, rather straightforwardly, Philo was a Greek-speaking Jew of the Second Temple Period.[97] Such a reassessment of Philo's Jewish identity makes him immediately relevant for this topic in reappraising the place of grace in Paul and Judaism; indeed, Philo may be all the more important because of his relative absence from such discussions thus far. Second, there is a huge proliferation of gift-language and concepts in Philo; it would be difficult, or perhaps impossible, to find an author who speaks about, references, or structures his thought on divine grace more than Philo. Accordingly, the similarity-in-contrast between Philo and Paul—both biographically and theologically—renders the *why* of this comparison somewhat superfluous. Paul and Philo were two diaspora Jews who interpreted scripture and believed divine generosity was paramount for understanding who God is and how God relates to the world: they are obvious objects of comparison on this topic.

A second issue to clarify is the nature of this comparison. In the following five chapters, I will attempt to set forth Philo's, then Paul's, understandings of

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94 For the relevance of Philo for NT studies, see the essays by Sterling, Nickelsburg, and Hurtado in R. Deines and K.-W. Niebuhr, eds., *Philo und das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen, I. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus Judeo-Hellenisticum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

95 G. Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism: Jewish Thought, 300 BCE to 200 CE* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 189–90.

96 For the view that Philo was, first and foremost, an interpreter of scripture, see P. Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for His Time* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). Cf. also V. Nikiprowetzky, *Le commentaire de l'Écriture chez Philon d'Alexandrie* (Leiden: Brill, 1977).

97 See, for example, D.T. Runia, "Philo, Alexandrian and Jew," in *Exegesis and Philosophy: Studies on Philo of Alexandria* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1990), 4–5.

divine grace, allowing their respective positions to illuminate and question the other. I will thus seek to follow what Engberg-Pedersen has termed the *lex Malherbe*: "comparison . . . requires a thorough knowledge of each figure to be compared in his own right and on his own premises.[98] More groundwork will be necessary for Philo—a lesser known quantity to most—to show how grace functions in his thought, and once that groundwork is laid, Philo will be used as a conversation partner for Paul on a range of interrelated topics.

However, comparisons between ancient figures can be problematic. As Sanders argued, difficulties of both "imbalance" and "imposition" can skew a comparison.[99] First, by imbalance, Sanders referred to the problem of comparing one individual, Paul, with essentially the whole of Palestinian Jewish literature. While this difficulty in our case is not quite as severe, we have exponentially more Philonic material than Pauline. Yet, as Sanders concluded, "There seems, however, to be no choice."[100] Fortunately, on the topic of grace, I believe, and will argue, that Philo is quite consistent. Accordingly, by approaching Philo largely thematically, I will seek to interpret and explain as many Philonic texts as possible; but there would be no benefit to looking at them all. This will further attenuate the problem of imbalance.[101] Second, imposition, for Sanders, referred to the potential homogenizing of a "rich a profusion of views" by "deriv[ing] *a* pattern of religion" from a body of literature, imposing an "artificial pattern."[102] For this project, the problem of imposition is not so much of forcing consistency on Philo or Paul, but of letting the agenda of one impose certain questions or interpretive options onto the other. I will seek to avoid this pitfall by setting forth the views of Philo and Paul in themselves, but the reader will be the ultimate judge of success or failure on this count.

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98 T. Engberg-Pedersen, "Self-Sufficiency and Power: Divine and Human Agency in Epictetus and Paul," in *Divine and Human Agency*, 118. Engberg-Pedersen is referring, of course, to the work and method of A.J. Malherbe; see, e.g., A.J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

99 Cf. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 19–20.

100 Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 19.

101 Although Philo is considered by many to be a "prolix and seemingly incoherent author," as D.T. Runia, *Philo and the Church Fathers* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 188 notes, the following chapters can be viewed as an argument for a general coherence to his thought. This is not to claim that Philo never contradicted himself, but I echo the judgment of J.M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan* (*323 BCE–117 CE*) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 164: "Occasionally Philo incorporates extraneous or inconsistent material, but he is generally in control of his own theology and critical of ideas he cannot harmonize with Scripture."

102 Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 20.

A third methodological issue is that of words and concepts.[103] Here we need only note two things. First, this is not a study of the word χάρις but of the concept of gift-giving in Philo and Paul, both of whom almost always—though sometimes not—expound the concept through the use of various gift-words (e.g. χάρις, δωρεά). Second, I make the basic assumption that words can have different meanings in different contexts—i.e., a word such as χάρις can mean something different in Paul's compared to Philo's writings. It will have different connotations because of its dissimilar syntactical connections and rhetorical-theological purposes.[104] Thus, I will not assume from the start that gift-language is or points to a known quantity. As Cohen has argued, the vocabulary of "Hellenistic-Jewish texts," such as Philo's, largely underwent "Christian re-definitions," which were "until fairly recently . . . accepted as their primary connotations by scholars of these texts."[105] This, in turn, has often led to a misreading of those texts. There is no inherent meaning to a word like χάρις; rather, we must let each author define their own use of it and make their own connections. Only then will a comparison between the two be fruitful.

Finally, I should make clear what Philonic and Pauline texts I will use and how I will approach them. For Philo, I will make use of the full range of his writings, including a few fragments not included in his collected works.[106] It is notoriously difficult to date Philo's individual treatises, or to plot chronological, thematic, theological or other kinds of development in Philo's thought. Consequently, and since I believe Philo's core theological commitments about divine generosity are consistent throughout his works, there would be no profit in dividing his thought chronologically or by genre;[107] thus, I will take all of his works together. For Paul, I will assume the standard seven letters (Romans, 1–2

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103 The essential study here is J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: OUP, 1962). See further M. Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

104 Cf. N.G. Cohen, "Context and Connotation. Greek Words for Jewish Concepts in Philo," in *Shem in the Tents of Japhet: Essays on the Encounter of Judaism and Hellenism* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 31: "... an important dimension of their writings is missed unless their words are also read in the same semantic field in which they were written."

105 Cohen, "Context and Connotation," 32.

106 The standard Greek text of Philo is L. Cohn, P. Wendland, and S. Reiter, eds., *Philonis Alexandrini Opera Quae Supersunt* (6 vols.; Berlin, 1896–1914), which is followed almost completely by the Loeb Classical Library; F.H. Colson, G.H. Whitaker, and R. Marcus, eds., *Philo* (Cambridge, MA, 1929–1962). I have used the LCL texts and provide references to other texts as needed. All translations of Philo and Paul are my own unless otherwise noted.

107 That is, the theological commitments about gift-giving in the allegorical treatises are not materially different from the commitments seen in the other genres.

Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon).[108] The main focus here will be on Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, and Galatians—with glances at other letters—in order to follow Paul where he speaks most explicitly about divine (and human) gift-giving. There will ultimately be some discrepancy between the ways Philo's and Paul's texts are used, which relates to the problem of "imbalance" that Sanders noted. That is, with Paul interpreters have the benefit of being able to work slowly verse-by-verse. The amount of material in Philo, however, precludes such an approach; consequently, the chapters on Philo will alternate between exegesis of specific texts and discussions of multiple texts.

5 Overview of the Study

This study has three main objectives.

In Part One, in order to avoid asking Pauline questions of Philo, I will set forth Philo's understanding of divine generosity. In chapter one, I will explore the major facets of Philo's doctrine of God to examine if and how they contribute to his notion of God as one who is wholly generous. For Philo, God is nothing if not φιλόδωρος, a lover of gifts and giving. But how do the other aspects of God's being relate to his generosity? The focus will therefore be Philo's language and logic for God's munificence. The final section will raise the issue of how God is both inexplicably gracious yet also a rationally discriminate giver. In chapter two, I will explore this potential discrepancy further by examining how exactly Philo constructs his concept of worth. As I will argue, to be virtuous is to be worthy to receive gifts; but what is the source of virtue? To answer this question, I will investigate the congruence of cosmology and ethics in Philo's thought.

In Part Two, I will turn to Paul. Chapters three and four largely mirror the first two chapters on Philo. Thus, in chapter three I will trace how Paul locates God's generosity in, and explicates that generosity by, the event of Christ's

108 However, I do not believe the differences or possible trajectories between the authentic Paulines and the others are that great with respect to the theme of grace. Broadly put, one possible development is that while Paul typically understands God's grace as the Christ-event, the author(s) of the deutero-Paulines and Pastorals—Paul or otherwise—also links grace with pre-temporal election or a salvation to-be-revealed; cf., e.g., 2 Tim 1.9: God's grace was "given to us in Christ Jesus before eternal times" (χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων). The moves are subtle and could reasonably be either a development by Paul of his own thought, an attempt to address certain aporiae in Paul's thought, or a maximizing of Paul's grace-works antithesis.

death and resurrection. Accordingly, if Philo's theology works from the creational foundation of the gift-nature of all things, what is the effect of working from the foundation of the Christ-event for Paul's understanding of his present time and his reading of scriptural history?[109] Chapter four will explore how the Christ-gift is given and how it is received, asking specifically, what role does Paul as apostle play in divine gift-giving? I will thus study how Paul's testimony encapsulates three important facets of divine giving: the unfitting recipient, apostleship as a gift, and apostolic proclamation as inherent to the reception of the gift. Finally, in chapter five I will investigate how for Paul the divine gift ultimately founds and binds together a social reality, and I will then probe certain aspects of that social reality. For example, what role in gift-giving is there for human recipients of the Christ-gift?

As already stated, the overarching aim is to place Philo and Paul in conversation. While Part One sets out Philo *sans* Paul, Philo is present throughout Part Two, questioning the logic of Paul's thought and serving as a conversation partner. Philo's appearances throughout the Paul chapters will be varied. In chapter three, he is a consistent voice that interrogates Paul. In chapter four, he has little to say throughout the chapter—on apostolic mediation!—but appears at the end in the discussion of gifts to the (un)worthy. Finally, in chapter five, a significant portion of the chapter is spent elaborating Philo's views on human giving, community, and thanksgiving in relation to Paul. The comparison between Philo and Paul is never lost from view, but each chapter in Part Two approaches the comparison differently.

As we will see, both Philo and Paul, in Sanders' words, keep "the gift and demand of God . . . in a healthy relationship with each other."[110] But, we might say, each defines, configures, and understands "gift," "demand," "healthy," and "relationship" differently. The intention—and hope—of this study is to shed clarifying light on divine grace in Philo, Paul, and on how the fundamental theological structures and logic of their thought relate to each other.

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109 Of course, it should be noted that Philo's and Paul's theologies of gift-giving are not abstract concepts formed apart from their social realities, but are inextricably tied to their own social conditions and purposes. Thus, for example, Philo's understanding of God's abundant generosity cannot be detached from his existence in Alexandria as a wealthy and politically important Jew; and Paul's understanding of the Christ-gift as a gift that is incongruous to its recipients cannot be separated from either his own experience or the experience and practice of the Gentile mission.

110 Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 427.

CHAPTER 1

The Perfect God Who Gives

> The devout Philo believed in God the giver. No one in his day urged this religious conviction with more power and moving passion.[1]

1 Introduction

For Philo, the hallmark of piety is to "attribute everything to God" (ἅπαντα δὲ προσάπτει θεῷ).[2] At its core, Philo's oeuvre can be understood as an attempt to do just that. Philo's God is the perfect Cause of all reality, the creating Being who overflows with goods upon the cosmos: everything is credited to God and considered a gift. Accordingly, a primary metaphor Philo uses to characterize God is that of a giver—a point that has received insufficient attention from interpreters.[3] Thus, in this chapter I will demonstrate how the principal themes of Philo's doctrine of God contribute to and propel his understanding of divine generosity. As Moffatt states, "this Alexandrian sage and saint is never tired of speaking about God, and he never speaks very long about any aspect of God without introducing grace."[4] I will argue that three axioms constitute Philo's view of divine beneficence, serving as grammatical rules for how one properly speaks about God's generosity: God is 1) creator and cause of all things, 2) by nature hyper-generous, and 3) in his actions a perfect and incommensurate giver.[5] These three axioms are interrelated and build on each other,

1 Moffatt, *Grace*, 45.

2 *Leg*. 3.29.

3 Some notable exceptions are Kennedy, Moffatt, Zeller. The problem has not been that scholars did not notice Philo's emphasis on divine generosity, but rather they have tended to attempt to situate Philo in his historical-philosophical context rather than work out the logic of his own thought.

4 Moffatt, *Grace*, 48.

5 Cf. D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 433: "Philo's doctrine of God is the coping stone of his thought . . . an understanding of Philo's views on the nature and activity of God will ensure that the other aspects of his thinking will settle securely into place." Or M. Hadas-Lebel, *Philo of Alexandria: A Thinker in the Jewish Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 181: "[t]hree themes constitute the very essence of his doctrine: God, the Law, and spiritual advancement." In this scheme, this chapter deals with the first theme and the next chapter will explore the latter two.

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and they must be interpreted in relation to one central rule: God is wise and rational, and therefore gives gifts according to who the recipient is and what is needed. Furthermore, the order of the axioms is important: Philo situates God's generosity in his creative activity, and the way he speaks of divine giving must be examined from this perspective. Divine grace is *cosmological* and *causative*: God's first and greatest gift is creation, and all other gifts bring the recipient in line with the order God has built into the cosmos. Therefore, in this chapter I will present how and why, for Philo, everything is a movement of divine generosity from a good God who needs nothing and therefore gives to his creation, while in the next chapter I will delineate more specifically the theological and philosophical constructs that frame Philo's understanding of gift-giving (e.g. Law of Nature, virtue).

2 God as Cause and Creator of All Things

Philo uses two concepts to explain how all created reality originates from God: the (primarily) philosophical concept of God as cause and the (primarily) biblical concept of God as creator. Philo uses whichever he needs as the situation calls for it, because both ideas point to the same truth in slightly different ways. Therefore, we will explore them sometimes together and sometimes separately, as needed by the evidence. The idea that God is the source of all reality—that God brings existence from nonexistence, order from chaos—provides the foundation and framework for Philo's understanding of God's generosity.

2.1 *Piety and Proper Understanding of God's Causation*

Philo aligns human piety with belief in God's causation, because it is fundamental to his thought that God alone created everything.[6] The wise person's belief in God as cause is the confirmation of piety (εὐσεβείας βεβαίωσις).[7] For example, by leaving his astrology-ridden homeland, Abraham learned that all things are governed by the cause who created them, not by fate.[8] Similarly, Abraham refused to receive from the king of Sodom (Gen 14.21–23), which

6 Cf. Barclay, "Grace and Agency," 142: "God's gracious causation of all that exists is of critical importance for Philo in distinguishing his philosophy from impious alternatives, and in motivating the central core of piety, gratitude to God."

7 *Mut*. 155.

8 *Abr*. 78. Cf. P. Frick, *Divine Providence in Philo of Alexandria* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 128; S. Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (Oxford: OUP, 1979), 61; for a broader discussion, see W.L. Knox, "Abraham and the Quest for God," *HTR* 28 (1935): 55–60; and the

exemplifies Abraham's belief that "all things come from the only wise God," not from created things.[9] Likewise, the essence of the "Great Vow" (cf. Num 6.2) is the belief that "God himself and from himself is the cause of good things" (τὸν θεὸν αἴτιον ἀγαθῶν αὐτὸν ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ).[10] Confessing God as cause is such a great work (ἔργον) that it cannot be properly viewed as a work of the soul but of God who "shines thanksgiving" in the soul.[11] The result of such belief is the presentation of offerings to God. Thus, Abel offered the firstborn in confession that even the older causes are held together according to the oldest of the causes, God.[12]

By contrast, disavowing God's causation is an unmistakable sign of impiety. Thus, some proudly consider "themselves the causes of the good things which happen,"[13] which is essentially self-deification, "hiding God who is the true Cause of creation" (τὸν ὡς ἀληθῶς αἴτιον γενέσεως ὄντα θεόν),[14] and idolatry.[15] The minds of such people are blinded—they cannot see God but only the world and what is in the world.[16] Pharaoh is a leading instantiation of this primarily Egyptian error of "being ignorant of the cause" because he loves the "material."[17] Yet Cain is the archetype of this impiety: Philo links Cain

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response by S. Sandmel, "Abraham's Knowledge of the Existence of God," *HTR* 44 (1951): 137–39.

9 *Ebr*. 105–07.

10 *Deus* 87. D. Winston and J. Dillon, *Two Treatises of Philo of Alexandria: A Commentary on De Gigantibus and Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1983), 325 note Plato's definition in *Laws* 801a: εὐχαὶ παρὰ θεῶν αἰτήσεις εἰσίν; Plato also clarifies that it is particularly a seeking of something good (ὡς ἀγαθὸν αἰτούμενοι). Cf. *Agr*. 99; *Sacr*. 53, where Philo states that the intent of a vow is "seeking good things from God." For vows in Philo, see J. Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 117–124; on the great vow, A. Cacciari, "Philo and the Nazirite," in *Italian Studies on Philo of Alexandria* (ed. F. Calabi; Boston: Brill, 2003), 147–64.

11 *Leg*. 1.82. On knowing God as cause: *Post*. 167–69.

12 *Conf*. 124. Cf. *Spec*. 2.171–80, 204; *Her*. 113–24.

13 *Sacr*. 54–57. Cf. *Conf*. 123. In response, Philo cites Deut 8.17–18a, which claims God as the one who "gives strength to you in order to obtain power." *Agr*. 173 and *Mut*. 221 connect self-love with neglect of viewing God as Cause. Cf. D.T. Runia and A. Geljon, *Philo of Alexandria: On Cultivation: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 253–54.

14 *Spec*. 1.10.

15 Self-deification is "ingratitude to the Benefactor of the whole world, who by his own power gives a bountiful surplus of goods to every part of the universe" (*Legat*. 118).

16 *Ebr*. 108–10. Cf. similarly, *Migr*. 179–81; *Spec*. 1.13.

17 *Leg*. 3.243. Cf. S. Pearce, *The Land of the Body: Studies in Philo's Representation of Egypt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 144, 155.

to Protagoras' statement that "man is the measure of all things," which means that humans generate all things.[18] Cain's essential "offence is not to give God His due, which . . . is equivalent to the skeptic's denial of God's creative power."[19]

Causation can be improperly located in humanity, polytheism, or the created universe,[20] but all who do so are like archers who, "aiming at many things and not aiming skillfully at any mark, put forward innumerable sources and causes of the creation of the universe, all of which are false, and are ignorant of the one Creator and Father of the universe."[21] Accordingly, belief in God as the Origin of all reality is of the utmost importance for Philo's thought,[22] for those who ascribe all things to God's grace are truly noble.[23] But there are very particular ways that God is to be understood as Cause.

2.2 *God's Goodness and the Origin of Creation*

In *Cher*. 124–130, Philo is interpreting the declaration in Genesis 4.1, "I have obtained a man through God." Philo believes that Adam has spoken improperly, because "God is cause, not instrument" (ὁ θεὸς αἴτιον, οὐκ ὄργανον). Adam stated that he obtained a man διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, where Philo believes ὑπό, παρά, and sometimes ἐκ can describe God's action, but not διά.[24] Whatever comes into

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18 Cf. *Post*. 33–39; H. Najman, "Cain and Abel as Character Traits: A Study in the Allegorical Typology of Philo of Alexandria," in *Eve's Children* (ed. G.P. Luttikhuizen; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 107–18; A.C. Geljon, "Philonic Elements in Didymus the Blind's Exegesis of the Story of Cain and Abel," *VC* 61 (2007): 282–312.

19 Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship*, 198. Cf. J. LaPorte, *Eucharistia in Philo* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1983), 133: "the Cain-Protagoras pair represents the chief enemy to a disposition of mind which refers everything to God."

20 Cf. *Spec*. 2.198.

21 *Conf*. 144. Cf. *Leg*. 3.29–31; *Somn*. 2.75–77.

22 This is consistent with Philo's understanding of Genesis not "as a theological or cosmological tract, but as the preface to a document of ethical and religious content." R. Radice, "Philo's Theology and Theory of Creation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (ed. A. Kamesar; Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 125.

23 *Post*. 42.

24 Though see *Leg*. 1.41 where Philo states that some things come into existence by (ὑπό) and through (διά) God. Runia, *Timaeus*, 104, 133, 171–74 draws attention to Philo's location in the development of "prepositional metaphysics" in Middle Platonism, "in which the Aristotelian doctrine of causes is adapted to the requirements of Platonic doctrine." Cf. R.R. Cox, *By the Same Word: Creation and Salvation in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 43–51; T.H. Tobin, *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation* (Washington D.C.: CBAA, 1983), 67–72. The term was popularized by J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism, 80 BC to AD 220* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977), 138, who was himself following W. Theiler, *Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1964). For a helpful overview, see G.E. Sterling, "Prepositional

existence is "through an instrument, but by a cause." Adam mistakes the Cause for the instrument, thus making himself the cause.[25]

Philo's Aristotelian understanding of causation guides his interpretation of this text.[26] God is the first or efficient cause (τὸ ὑφ' οὗ), and everything exists by him.[27] The four elements are the material cause (τὸ ἐξ οὗ), from which the world was "compounded." The instrument is the Logos (τὸ δι' οὗ), which constructs or prepares the materials. And the final cause (τὸ δι' ὅ) is the "goodness of the Demiurge"—the "for the sake of which" or end goal of causation.[28]

Metaphysics in Jewish Wisdom Speculation and Early Christological Hymns," *StPhA* 9 (1997): 219–38. Cf. also *QG* 1.58; *Prov*. 1.23. In this latter text, the final cause is "the model." Thus, as Sterling notes, Philo's use of πρὸς ὅ rather than δι' ὅ "suggests that Philo knows more than one analysis" (227–28).

25 Parents do play a role in childbirth in connection with God's causation. In *Her*. 171–172, parents are instruments of creation (ὄργανα γενέσεως). Mortal parents imitate the divine powers of creation, such that God is the "beginning of creation" (ἀρχὴ γενέσεως) and human parents are the end (τέλος). Similarly, *Decal*. 51; *Ebr*. 73; *Cher*. 43–46; *Spec*. 2.2; Cf. M. Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 170. Parents are similarly compared to God as the benefactors of their children; cf. *Spec*. 2.229–231; *Decal*. 165–166; *Opif*. 77. A.S. Carman, "Philo's Doctrine of the Divine Father and the Virgin Mother," *The American Journal of Theology* 9 (1905): 491–518 provides a near-comprehensive catalogue of passages relating to divine and human parenting.

26 D. Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 62 clarifies that God's causation in Aristotle is an inward activity, while, for Philo, causation is an "avenue by which God may be known."

27 Cf. *Fug*. 12: γέγονέ τε γὰρ ὁ κόσμος καὶ πάντως ὑπ' αἰτίου τινὸς γέγονεν. As R.J. Hankinson, *Cause and Explanation in Ancient Greek Thought* (OUP, 2001), 342 argues, making the efficient cause the true cause is effectively Stoic. This is based on the idea that everything can be categorized as either an active or passive principle, an idea seen in Philo. For example, in *Opif*. 7–9 Philo distinguishes between God as δραστήριον αἴτιον and the world as τὸ παθητόν. On this text, see D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Brill: Leiden, 2001), 115–17. I agree with Runia and G. Reydams-Schils, "Stoicized Readings of Plato's Timaeus in Philo of Alexandria," *StPhA* 7 (1995): 89 against H. Weiss, *Untersuchungen zur Kosmologie des Hellenistischen und Palästinischen Judentums* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966), 42, that τὸ παθητόν should not be read with an implied αἴτιον. God causes passive created material to exist. Runia, *On the Creation*, 119 also links Philo's insistence on God alone as highest cause to Homer's line (*Iliad* 2.204–05; quoted in *Conf*. 170), "It is not good that many lords should rule, let there be one lord, one king." Cf. E. Koskenniemi, "Philo and Greek Poets," *JSJ* 41 (2010): 306: "Homer is now used to rebuke polytheism and to support monotheism."

28 C.A. Anderson, *Philo of Alexandria's Views of the Physical World* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 77 notes that "here Philo follows Plato (*Tim*. 29e) . . . But as is typical, Philo also finds a biblical basis for this position" in Gen 6.8. See further below. *QG* 1.58 omits a final cause.

God is thus τὸ αἴτιον and his goodness is ἡ αἰτία; thus, beyond demarcating God's role in causation, this text associates God's causation and goodness.[29]

Philo makes this link often. Philo asserts, "Therefore, if someone were to ask me what the cause of the creation of the world was (τίς αἰτία γενέσεως κόσμου), having learned from Moses, I would respond that the goodness of the Existent One, which is the eldest of the graces, is in itself the cause" (ἡ τοῦ ὄντος ἀγαθότης, ἥτις ἐστὶ πρεσβυτάτη τῶν χαρίτων οὖσα ἑαυτῇ).[30] God's ἀγαθότης induces God's causation.[31] Philo often prefaces his answer with a phrase like "if anyone wants to know."[32] Philo admits that he is speculating, yet Platonic philosophy and the biblical language of grace permit him to reply. In one context, Philo says that a person would not "miss the mark" by answering as one of the ancients did, "that the Father and Creator is good" (ἀγαθὸν εἶναι τὸν πατέρα καὶ ποιητήν).[33] Plato is not explicitly named, though he is clearly the foremost of the "ancients" Philo has in mind, as his God creates because "He was good" (ἀγαθὸς ἦν).[34] Elsewhere, Philo asserts that the "just man" learns that everything exists because of God's grace (χάριν ὄντα τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ σύμπαντα); in contemplating the origin of creation (ἀρχὴ γενέσεως), one rightly says that it

29 Runia, *Timaeus*, 135 claims that "Philo is the first thinker to associate the goodness of Plato's demiurge with the Judaeo-Christian conception of God the creator, an event of enormous significance in the history of ideas."

30 *Deus* 108. There is a textual issue in the phrase ἥτις ἐστὶ πρεσβυτάτη *** τῶν χαρίτων οὖσα ἑαυτῇ in *Deus* 108. P. Wendland, "Philo und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Griechischen Philosophie und Religion* (ed. P. Wendland and O. Kern; Berlin: Reimer Verlag, 1895), 1–75, argued that the text should read πρεσβυτάτη τῶν θεοῦ δυναμέων τῶν χαρίτων οὖσα ἑαυτῇ, reflecting the idea of the Powers as the origin of gifts/Graces. In the Loeb edition, Colson and Whitaker 65–66 (cf. 488) supply πρεσβυτάτη χαρίτων, πηγή τῶν χαρίτων οὖσα ἑαυτῇ, translating it, "that goodness which is the oldest of His bounties and *itself the source* of others." They point to *Leg*. 3.78 as support that goodness is itself a χάρις. Winston and Dillon, *Two Treatises*, 331 propose that as the question being asked is τίς αἰτία γενέσεως κόσμου, then "αἰτιῶν might be a more suitable supplement." Both F. Calabi, *God's Acting, Man's Acting: Tradition and Philosophy in Philo of Alexandria* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 21–22 and Zeller, *Charis*, 36–37 n. 22 follow Colson and Whitaker.

31 The question arises, then, whether God's creating activity was necessary or freely willed. How can this good God *not* create necessarily? Runia, *Timaeus*, 445–46 tentatively argues for a freely willed act, yet he notes that God's will cannot "be the subject of philosophical investigation," for then one is asking "what God is"—an unanswerable question for Philo.

32 Cf. *Opif*. 21; *Leg*. 3.78; *Deus* 108.

33 *Opif*. 21.

34 *Tim*. 29E. The influence of Plato's *Timaeus* on Philo's thought can hardly be overestimated, but it is beyond the scope of this chapter to lay out that relationship more fully. Others have done that work well; see, above all, the excellent work of Runia, *Timaeus*.

is the "goodness and grace of God, which he has given" to humanity (ἀγαθότης καὶ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ, ἣν ἐχαρίσατο).[35] Even though he needed nothing, God created because he was "good and bounteous" (ἀγαθὸς καὶ φιλόδωρος ἦν).[36] The world is thus not "an end in itself, for it owes its existence to the benevolent and loving creator."[37]

An amalgamation of Aristotelian and Platonic thought thus provides guidelines to specify God's role in causation: God stands at the beginning of all causation, because of his goodness. Understanding God's causation properly is important because this causation is not merely what God *does* but is who God *is*.[38] Creating is God's ἴδιον: "For God never ceases creating, but as it is the ἴδιον of fire to burn and of snow to make cold, so also it is God's ἴδιον to create."[39] Creation is God's ἴδιον alone (ἴδιον μὲν δὴ θεοῦ τὸ ποιεῖν), while the ἴδιον of created beings is to suffer (ἴδιον δὲ γενητοῦ τὸ πάσχειν) or be acted upon, not to ποιεῖν.[40] Since Philo identifies creating so closely with God's being, God cannot stop creating. Thus, when Philo interprets Gen 2.2–3—about God's "resting"—Philo distinguishes between "resting" (καταπαύω), which means "cause to rest," and "ceasing" (παύω). God does not cease creating but causes created things to rest, and on the seventh day, God ceases creating mortal things and turns to creating divine things. God changes activity but does not stop.[41] "We have made clear that God never ceases from creating, but begins the creation (γενέσεως ἄρχεται)[42] of other things, since he is not only Craftsman but also the Father of all existing things."[43]

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35 *Leg*. 3.78.

36 *Mut*. 46. Cf. *QG* 2.13.

37 P.L. Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 43.

38 Radice, "Theory of Creation," 124–25 notes that, in distinction from the philosophical methodologies of Plato, Aristotle, and Stoicism, when speaking of God (specifically as cause/creator), Philo does not "follow the logical sequence of problems; for example, instead of asking the question of whether God exists or what He is, he rather takes for granted that God exists and that His nature is that of a creator." Radice thus dubs Philo's method "'allegorical' or 'exegetical.'"

39 *Leg*. 1.5. Philo picked up this use of ἴδιον from Aristotle; cf. W.E. Mann, "Immutability and Predication: What Aristotle Taught Philo and Augustine," *IJPR* 22 (1987): 22–24.

40 *Cher*. 77.

41 Cf. *Leg*. 1.5–16.

42 A.P. Bos, "Philo of Alexandria: A Platonist in the Image and Likeness of Aristotle," *StPhA* 10 (1998): 66–86 argues that ἀρχὴ γενέσεως replaces Platonic concepts of God as Maker for Philo.

43 *Leg*. 1.18. On God's perpetual creative activity, see *Fug*. 177, 198; *Her*. 36, 172; *Mos*. 2.100; *Somn*. 1.76; *Spec*. 4.187.

Philo also links the cause of creation to God's goodness *qua* Power: "For God is the name of Goodness, the Cause," from which is clear that God caused all things not out of his Sovereignty but out of his Goodness.[44] God is most properly understood as the "Existent One"—ὁ ὤν from Exodus 3.14 or, in philosophical parlance, τὸ ὄν. God is pure being.[45] Therefore, Philo interprets "God" (ὁ θεός) and "Lord" (ὁ κύριος) not as different names for the Existent One, but as designating his Powers.[46] The Powers bridge the gap between the transcendent Existent One and the actions Philo sees him performing in creation, as told in the Scriptures.[47] As Zeller states, "[d]urch den Einsatz der Kräfte gelingt Philo ein philosophischer Balance-akt: er kann alles vom Seinsprinzip abhängig sein lassen, ohne es in alles hineinzuziehen."[48] "God" designates the "creative power" (ἡ ποιητικὴ δύναμις), through which "the Father begat and crafted all things" (διὰ γὰρ ταύτης τῆς δυνάμεως ἔθηκε τὰ πάντα ὁ γεννήσας καὶ τεχνιτεύσας πατήρ); this is why the statement "I am your God" is equivalent to "I am your Creator and Maker."[49] Philo is unequivocal that "God" is the creative *and* beneficent Power by which all things have come into existence, such that God the Power can simply be called "Goodness" (ἀγαθότητι τὸ πᾶν γεγεννηκέναι).[50] God is δύναμις . . . ἡ κοσμοποιητική.[51] In Moses' creation account only θεός is used,

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44 *Leg*. 3.73.

45 Consequently, God cannot be named; *Mos*. 1.75.

46 Kennedy, *Philo's Contribution*, 144 calls Philo's doctrine of the Powers one of "those ingenious verbal distinctions to which he is so strongly addicted." We will return to the Powers periodically; but for a fuller treatment, see Calabi, *God's Acting*, 73–109. One of Philo's favorite allegories for the Powers is the Cherubim from Genesis; cf. *Cher*. and F. Strickert, "Philo on the Cherubim," *StPhA* 8 (1996): 40–57. See also the fragment *De Deo*; for a translation, F. Siegert, "The Philonian Fragment *De Deo*: First English Translation," *StPhA* 10 (1998): 1–33.

47 Cf. e.g. *Post*. 20.

48 Zeller, *Charis*, 45.

49 *Mut*. 29. Cf. *Spec*. 1.307. Because Philo connects God's creative activity with his goodness, he also has a strong doctrine of providence; cf. Frick, *Divine Providence*; R. Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Philo* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 36–37; A. Mendelson, *Philo's Jewish Identity* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 46–47. In Philo, cf. esp. *Opif*. 9, 171–72; *Sobr*. 63.

50 *Cher*. 27. As Hadas-Lebel, *Philo of Alexandria*, 184 says, God "acts in contradictory directions by the intermediary of his two potencies." However, as we will discuss in the next chapter, the Powers are united by their location in God's Logos. E.R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (New Haven: YUP, 1935), 41–44 probably presses the unity of the Powers too far but serves as a corrective to exaggerations about Philo's understanding of God's diverse actions in the world.

51 *Opif*. 21.

and this θεός gives "always and continually" and acts as a benefactor constantly (ὁ ἀδιαστάτως εὐεργετῶν).[52] Accordingly, "all things in the world and the world itself are a gift and benefaction and grace of God"[53] because the Existent One creates by God the Power "according to which He is beneficent." Indeed, in as much as God is "God," his fitting acts are to give "graces and gifts and benefits" (χάριτας καὶ δωρεὰς καὶ εὐεργεσίας) because he is "by nature good and bountiful" (ἀγαθὸν καὶ φιλόδωρον ὄντα φύσει).[54] God not only creates because of his goodness, but he creates *by* his Goodness and it is through Goodness that he is beneficent. Thus, being beneficent is also a property belonging to God: θεοῦ δὲ τὸ εὐεργετεῖν ἴδιον.[55] The Existent One's acts of creating and giving are located in the same power, as creation is the primal example and paradigm of God's flexing his beneficent powers. Accordingly, God's creating-goodness and gift-giving cannot be separated. On this link, Runia states:

> Plato's doctrine is now explicitly attributed to Moses, but is at the same time connected with the unPlatonic theme of God's grace. Indeed the goodness and the grace of God are so closely associated in Philo's mind that the word χάρις in the Biblical text induces him, without any support from the context, to recollect the creational account.[56]

But the goodness of Plato's Demiurge and Philo's God should not be confused. To quote Runia again, "Platonic goodness is essentially *metaphysical*, signifying excellence of being, whereas the goodness of the God of the Bible is best described in terms of *grace*, the lovingkindness and forebearance shown by a father to his children."[57] Philo's God is the beneficent Creator God, who gives the world as his first and greatest εὐεργεσία.

God's unceasing creative activity[58] and his ultimate causation of all things place him in close relation to creation. However, a further and perhaps more

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52 *Plant*. 86, 89.

53 *Leg*. 3.78.

54 *Fug*. 66. See also *Mos*. 2.238; *QE* 2.51. Harrison, *Grace*, 121 says "the impetus for God's beneficence stems from His dual Potencies," which seems incorrect; the impetus is God's generous being that is expressed through the agency of the beneficent power alone.

55 *Mut*. 129. Cf. *Plant*. 130: οἰκειότατόν ἐστιν ἔργον θεῷ μὲν εὐεργετεῖν. Cf also *Deo* 7.

56 Runia, *Timaeus*, 133. Cf. also Anderson, *Physical World*, 77.

57 Runia, *Timaeus*, 441. Philo's God is also metaphysically good; the distinction is simply that Philo insists on this fact by pointing to how God's goodness overflows into creation.

58 On which, see the discussion in D. Winston, "Philo's Theory of Eternal Creation: 'De Prov.' 1.6–9," *PAAJR* 46/47 (1980): 593–606; A. Lebedev, "Xenophanes on the Immutability of God: A Neglected Fragment in Philo Alexandrinus," *Hermes* 128 (2000): 385–386; S. Lauer,

critical specification relating to God's causation goes past the "how" and "why," to clarify what is meant when God's generation of all things is affirmed. If God causes all things because of and by his goodness, can he create all things? The "why" of God's creating determines the "how"—which should determine the "what." Yet, Philo affirms the existence of sin and evil. What, then, does God create?

2.3 *What "All Things" Come from God?*

God is clearly the "cause of all things,"[59] but set alongside this assertion is the superseding belief that God causes only the *good*.[60] Philo states the issue plainly in *Agr*. 128–129:

> There are some who think it pious to claim that all things exist by God, both the good things and the opposite things. To these we may say that part of your opinion is praiseworthy, but . . . the other is blameworthy: . . . blameworthy insofar as your opinion is without distinction or division. For it is necessary not to mix and mingle everything indiscriminately while declaring [God] the cause; but with distinction confess *God the cause of good things only*.

Few other things could be more damning than to assert God as the origin of evil,[61] because Moses "inserts in all parts of his legislation that the Deity is not the cause of evil."[62] Other texts speak of God simply not choosing to cause evil. God is the "cause of all things, able to do all things but willing only the best" (τῷ πάντων αἰτίῳ καὶ δυναμένῳ μὲν πάντα, βουλομένῳ δὲ τὰ ἄριστα), as indeed he is the "non-production of evils" (ἀφορία κακῶν).[63] Philo understands God's creation of an ordered universe from disorder as proof that God's wish is only

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"Philo's Concept of Time," *JJS* 19 (1958): 39–46; G.E. Sterling, "*Creatio temporalis, aeterna, vel continua?* An Analysis of the Thought of Philo of Alexandria," *SPhA* 4 (1992): 15–41.

59 *Fug*. 141; Cf. *Spec*. 3.178; *Ebr*. 61; *Det*. 147; *Her*. 35; *Decal*. 52.

60 Cf. Plato's *Republic* 2.379. P. Karavites, *Evil, Freedom, & the Road to Perfection in Clement of Alexandria* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 17–28 provides a helpful overview of positions on the origin of evil, starting with the ANE and ending with Philo.

61 *Fug*. 84. Philo provides no solution to the question of the origin of evil—it just does not come from God. However, he does attribute it either to subordinate powers or humanity, which is an act of theological legerdemain. Radice, "Theory of Creation," 144 views this as one of the more pressing problems for Philo's doctrine of grace and God's goodness. Cf. O. Leaman, *Evil and Suffering in Jewish Philosophy* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 33–47.

62 *QG* 1.68.

63 *Abr*. 268.

to do good things, even though he can do otherwise.[64] As Radice notes, even if "God has the power to do both good and evil, from an ethical perspective He neither wills evil nor has responsibility for it, because He is good in an absolute sense."[65] That is, God's ontological goodness necessarily delimits how God acts, but it cannot then be asserted that something is beyond God's power; it is not out of God's power to give something imperfectly good, but it is out of his nature.

Accordingly, Philo makes certain distinctions: of all created things, "some come into existence by (ὑπό) God and through (διά) God, but others by God but not through God; the best things came into existence both by him and through him."[66] God employs his Powers and other subordinates to be the cause of the "opposite things" (τὰ ἐναντία).[67] Thus, in Gen 1.26, when God says, "Let *us* make,"[68] Philo concedes that only God knows why he spoke in the plural, but Philo conjectures that the plural indicates that God was speaking to his subordinate Powers.[69] Although God is superior to everything, he fittingly associates with his Powers,[70] because their presence is necessary due to the mixed nature of humans. While some beings participate in neither virtue nor vice (e.g. plants) and others only in virtue (e.g. stars), humans are capable of good and evil.[71] Each human is μεθόριος, "on the border," and can go either way.[72]

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64 *Spec*. 4.187. Cf. differently *Leg*. 3.105; *Fug*. 79. That God brought order from disorder is an important aspect of Philo's debate with Platonist understandings of creation; cf. Winston, "Philo's Theory of Eternal Creation," 599.

65 Radice, "Theory of Creation," 131.

66 *Leg*. 1.41.

67 *Abr*. 143. Cf. *Fug*. 66; *QG* 4.42; *QE* 1.23.

68 See *Opif*. 72–75; *Conf*. 169–81; *Fug*. 68–72; and *Mut*. 30–31 in which the same themes are present in different configurations. On these texts, cf. Runia, *Timaeus*, 243–45.

69 Cf. *Opif*. 72.

70 *Conf*. 175. Calabi, *God's Acting*, 17–38 has demonstrated the problems of speaking with any specificity about "how 'He who is' is related to the powers." The Powers can have no existence separate from the Existent One, but Philo uses them precisely to distance the Existent One from creation. While H. Conzelmann, "Χάρις Κτλ," in *TDNT* (vol. 9; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 390 goes too far in stating that Philo develops "the notion of the δυνάμεις to the point of hypostatization," Calabi (35–37) claims that the Powers primarily represent "different degrees of capacity in terms of human perception" of God; which is true, of course. But this does not fix the problem that if perception is the real issue, then Philo has not truly safeguarded God from evil.

71 *Opif*. 73.

72 C. Termini, "Philo's Thought Within the Context of Middle Judaism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, 104. But this understanding of human nature does not imply a robust sense of human free will; see below. *Contra* Windisch, *Frömmigkeit Philos*, 16, we also

With this dual-capability, humans often choose evil.[73] And since humans are a mix, it was only partly appropriate for God to create them.[74] Accordingly, if humans do evil, it is not attributed to God, because he did not cause what made the evil possible; if humans do good, it is because of God's involvement.[75]

Creation itself is thus good and perfect insofar as it reflects God's perfection. The world has been created in such a way that it is a "complete work . . . worthy of the Demiurge" (παντελὲς ἔργον ἄξιόν. . .τοῦ δημιουργοῦ).[76] Indeed, when God finished creating, he asked his subordinates if anything was left to be done, and one replied that everything was "perfect and complete," but asked for the gift of reason, which God also gave.[77] Yet perfection is *not* inherent to creation but is found in creation on account of the "grace of the Cause,"[78] in that God shared of his own excellent nature (ἀρίστης αὐτοῦ φύσεως),[79] and because creation was made to be in harmony with its own parts.[80]

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cannot say: "Die Erinnerung an die Massenhaftigkeit des menschlichen Schmutzes löst die Forderung der Selbstreinung auf." Humans are fully dependent on God's gifts for virtuous living while they live virtuously. Windisch is working in Protestant categories where the Law's demand drives the sinful human to God's grace, which, as we will see, is not a helpful way to approach Philo.

73 *Conf*. 178: ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν ἔχων ἐπιστήμην αἱρεῖται μὲν πολλάκις τὰ φαυλότατα.

74 *Opif*. 74. Cf. *Fug*. 72.

75 *Opif*. 75; *Mut*. 31; *Conf*. 175–81.

76 *Cher*. 112.

77 *Plant*. 127–128. On this text, see Runia, *Timaeus*, 114–15. Cf. also *Opif*. 77.

78 *Plant*. 93.

79 *Opif*. 21. Cf. Runia, *Timaeus*, 438: "God, as absolute being, gives a share of his being to the cosmos and its parts, thereby granting his creatures existence but at the same time making his own existence known." Philo also has a strong Creator-created distinction. God is beyond time and place and has created everything in subjection to himself (*Post*. 14). The "Craftsman is better than the crafted" (*Decal*. 69. Cf. *Leg*. 2.3; *Deus* 80; *Opif*. 8–9). God is immovable, creation is moveable (*Somn*. 1.249; *Leg*. 2.83. But see *Somn*. 2.220). And God, according to his essence, is separate from everything created (τῷ πάσης γενέσεως διεζευγμένῳ κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν θεῷ; *Somn*. 2.28. Cf. *Post*. 20).

80 Cf. *Spec*. 4.187; *Cher*. 112; *Post*. 14; and esp. *Cher*. 110–12. Yet, rightly, T.H. Billings, *The Platonism of Philo Judaeus* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1919), 13: "... this power that shapes in the physical world the images of His own thought cannot make those images perfect. Matter is always to some extent recalcitrant. Physical necessity limits God's activity and distorts His work." For a nuanced discussion of the issue, see Anderson, *Physical World*.

2.4 *Conclusion: God's Gracious Creative Work*

God does not create indiscriminately: God's goodness is itself the cause and thus he creates what is good. Thus, for Philo, it is vital not only to specify precisely God's role in causation but also to delineate what God does and does not create—and how this is so. Importantly, this section demonstrates that all things—except evil—have to be attributed to God. Thus, unsurprisingly, Philo makes a link between goodness and creating and creating and gift-giving. God creates because of and by his goodness, his beneficent Power by which he gives gifts. Creation, then, is gift—and everything in the created realm is gift. Philo's theology of creation means that literally everything that is not evil has to be considered through the prism of divine grace. And as we will see, divine grace has to be considered through the lens of creation.

3 God's Hyper-Generous Nature

3.1 *God as Sole Owner of All Reality*

Philo's logic runs as follows: since God created everything, he owns everything and needs nothing. There is "no room for a grudging or envious spirit in the divine," which means that God can be openhanded with his creation.[81] In this section I will explain how Philo connects God's ownership of all things to his beneficent nature. Thus, this section connects the previous section to what follows.

In *Cher*. 84–123 Philo uses two texts to affirm God's undivided possession of all things.[82] Philo begins with Numbers 28.2: "Command the sons of Israel and say to them, 'my gifts (δῶρα), my presents (δόματα), my burnt offerings (καρπώματα) for a fragrant aroma you will maintain to offer to me in my feasts.'" What entices Philo about this passage is the frequency of the possessive pronouns and the gift-vocabulary, which prompts Philo to use further gift-language, χάρις, δόσις, and δωρεά, to interpret the verse. Before the verse itself, Philo adds, "'All things are mine,' God says," and Numbers 28.2 thus explicates

81 Runia, *Timaeus*, 136. Of course, for most of his life Philo had little reason to question his belief in God's abundant grace; as Barclay, *Mediterranean Diaspora*, 160 writes: "Everything Philo writes, and indeed the leisure he has to write it, reflects that cushion of wealth which protects him from the harsh realities experienced by 'the common herd.'"

82 Nevertheless, we must also here qualify the "all:" "there is no good thing that does not belong to God and is not divine" (*Sacr*. 63).

the "all things."[83] Of all existing things (ὅλα), some things are considered worthy (ἀξιόω) of the lower status of "giving" (δόσις) and others of the higher status are given the special name of "gift" or "bounty" (δωρεά). Others still are benefits of a kind that produce virtue as their fruits, which nourish the contemplative soul.[84] The person who understands the gift-nature of all things that results from God's sole ownership of all things will offer to God the "blameless and most beautiful offering," faith (πίστις), at God's feasts.[85]

Next, Leviticus 25.23 reads: "And the land shall not be sold permanently, for *all* the land is mine, because you are strangers and sojourners before me." Philo adds πᾶσα to the second clause, which accentuates the text as the clearest proof that "all things are in God's possession (κτήσει μὲν τὰ πάντα θεοῦ)," while created beings only have use of them as a loan (χρήσει δὲ μόνον γενέσεώς ἐστι). For Philo, "all the land is mine" is equivalent to "every created thing is mine." Nothing can be sold in perpetuity, then, because God owns everything. But immediately following is this: "But the one who possesses his own work has given, because he does not need" (τὸ δὲ ἔργον τὸ ἴδιον ὁ κεκτημένος δεδώρηται, ὅτι οὐ δεῖται). God's giving does not make humans possessors, because everything is still God's; but it shows that God is a "giver of all things" (δωρητικὸς τῶν ἁπάντων) that he possesses.[86] Recognizing this fact leads to proper care of one's things and even provides comfort in knowing that "the world and everything in the world are both the works and possessions of the one who begat them."[87] Humans do not even own those things of which they consist: soul, body, mind, etc.

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83 Cf. *Leg*. 3.195: ἐπειδὴ μόνῳ ἁρμόττει θεῷ λέγειν τὸ ἐμόν, αὐτοῦ γὰρ ὄντως κτήματα μόνου τὰ πάντα.

84 Philo's distinctions between types of gifts is clearer in *Leg*. 3.195–96 where he is also interpreting Numbers 28.2: a "gift" (δῶρον) means a perfect and good thing that "God gives to the perfect," while a "present" (δόμα) is prepared for a shorter time/purpose, of which the "practicers of a good nature who are advancing partake."

85 The proper attitude for offerings is thus to understand that "you bring a possession of God, not of yourself" (τὸ θεοῦ προσάξεις κτῆμα, οὐ τὸ σαυτοῦ; *Sacr*. 97). See also *Plant*. 130; *Spec*. 2.180. Humans should give offerings of gratitude to their beneficent Giver, which is central to piety. Indeed, "although needing nothing, God commands to offer to him the things that are his own because of his excessive beneficence for our race" (*Deus* 7; cf. *Decal*. 81; *Spec*. 2.218–19). On this connection, see esp. LaPorte, *Eucharistia*, 44. Cain's error is that he believes himself to possess all things; indeed, "Cain's name interpreted means 'possession'" (*Cher*. 52). Cf. Geljon, "Philonic Elements," 288–89.

86 *Cher*. 123. Also *Leg*. 3.33; *Cher*. 83; *Ebr*. 107. Cf. Zeller, *Charis*, 39.

87 *Cher*. 119.

The corollary is that since the "God who possesses all things needs nothing" (ὁ μὲν γὰρ θεὸς πάντα κεκτημένος οὐδενὸς δεῖται),[88] he benefits others unstintingly.[89] Philo thus takes it as fact that each person, upon birth, "finds the great gift of God, the entire world" (εὐθὺς εὑρίσκει τὸ μέγα δῶρον θεοῦ τὸν παντελῆ κόσμον).[90] Interestingly, one of Philo's explanations for why humans were created last was so that God could prepare every other thing as a gift for human flourishing; those who "go deepest into the Laws" know this.[91] God's possessiveness is matched by his generosity.

Interpreting God's words to Abraham in Gen 15.9, "take for me" (λάβε μοι), Philo says this means humans possess nothing good of their own and that everything comes from another; thus, "all things are the possession of [the] God who gives" (θεοῦ τοῦ διδόντος κτήματα πάντα).[92] As Philo quips, "you came naked and you will depart again naked, having received the use of the time between birth and death from God."[93] Life itself is on loan from God, and at death the "parts resolve into their elements"—the "loan that was lent to each is repaid" (ἀποδίδωμι) to Nature.[94] Consequently, everything humans have (not possess) in this life is a gift-loan from God, and thus humans only have *use* of the things they have.[95] God's ownership of all things reaffirms that creation is an act of giving. Philo can say that "the universal Ruler of heaven and earth has and bestows his good things on whomever he pleases' (ἔχει καὶ παρέχει οἷς ἂν ἐθέλῃ τὰ ἀγαθὰ), because God formerly created and now never ceases holding it together.[96] God creates everything, and thus owns everything; thus everything is gift.[97]

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88 *Mos*. 1.157. Cf. *Cher*. 123; *Post*. 4; *Spec*. 1.294–95.

89 *Det*. 54–55.

90 *Ebr*. 118.

91 *Opif*. 77. Cf. *Mos*. 2.148.

92 *Her*. 102–03. For a exposition of the importance of this distinction for Philo, see further C. Noack, "Haben oder Empfangen. Antithetische Charakterisierungen von Torheit und Weisheit bei Philo und Paulus," in *Philo und das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen, 1. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus Judeo-Hellenisticum* (WUNT 172; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 283–307.

93 *Spec*. 1.295. Noack, "Haben oder Empfangen," 306: "Bei Philo erkennt der Weise, dass das, was er scheinbar besitz, Gabe des Schöpfers ist, er erkennt sich als Geschöpf."

94 *Post*. 5.

95 Cf. *Sacr*. 97; *Cher*. 108–09.

96 *Sacr*. 40. The connection is also made in *Deus* 57; God "has everything as a possession, but gives by using the Logos as minister of his gifts" (τὰ σύμπαντα ἔχει κτήματα, δίδωσι δὲ λόγῳ χρώμενος ὑπηρέτῃ δωρεῶν).

97 Cf. again Runia, *Timaeus*, 137. See also *Deo* 12: "As for envy, as I have already said many times, he banished it by his munificence, because he is immensely generous."

3.1.1 Selling versus Giving

One further point to note on divine possession vis-à-vis beneficence is Philo's distinction between divine giving and human selling. In his interpretation of Leviticus 25.23, Philo reads the text thus: "the land shall not be sold by selling."[98] This wooden translation highlights how Philo adapts the phrase from "the land will not be sold εἰς βεβαίωσιν," which means "forever" or "in perpetuity," to what he writes here: "the land will not be sold πράσει," the dative of πρᾶσις, meaning "sale" or "transaction." Philo's change focuses on human selling, because, as Philo notes, the text is silent about the "by whom" of the selling, and the reader is instructed to look around and take stock of human interactions that pose as gift-giving: "all who are said to give (χαρίζομαι) are actually selling (πιπράσκω) rather than giving gifts (δωρέω), and those whom we think to receive gifts (λαμβάνειν χάριτας) are in truth buying (ὠνέομαι)." The sellers, because they are looking for repayment though "praise or honor," are actually "seeking a return for the gift" (ζητοῦντες χάριτος ἀντίδοσιν), and consequently the exchange is made as a gift only in name, while in essence the action is a sale. Likewise, the recipients of the gifts "take care to pay back by repaying at the right time" (μελετῶντες ἀποδοῦναι καὶ ἐπὶ καιρὸν ἀποδιδόντες), thus acting as purchasers.[99]

By contrast, "God is not a cheap market seller, but a giver of all things (δωρητικὸς δὲ τῶν ἁπάντων), pouring forth everlasting springs of gifts (ἀενάους χαρίτων πηγὰς ἀναχέων), not desiring recompense. For he is neither needy (οὔτε γὰρ ἐπιδεὴς αὐτός) nor is any created thing able to repay him a gift (οὔτε τις τῶν γεγονότων ἱκανὸς ἀντιδοῦναι δωρεάν)." Consequently, God's giving is set against human giving (as well as improper construals of divine benefaction), in what must have appeared to be a critique of the benefaction system.[100] Although this is not all Philo has to say about human giving and its relation to divine beneficence, this passage provides grounds for seeing the benefaction system as "subject to theological re-evaluation" in Philo's mind.[101] In context, the passage is set in an argument about God being the sole possessor of all reality. Thus, the theological principle to deduce is that one can only give what one

98 *Cher.* 121–23.

99 Cf. Harrison, *Grace*, 131: For Philo, Greco-Roman "benefaction is at heart a financial transaction, in spite of the specious nature of its terminology." Harrison notes that "[p]repositions such as ἀπο and ἀντί, which preface verbs such as ἀποδιδόναι and ἀντιδιδόναι, sharpen our focus on the projected return in the transaction, as does reciprocation terminology like ἀμοιβή."

100 As Harrison, *Grace*, 132 states, "Philo's approach to beneficence is unusual in ancient literature by virtue of his unabashed criticism of an institution which was viewed in a positive light."

101 Harrison, *Grace*, 132.

owns, and as God owns all things, only God can give. Human "giving" is a self-interested passing around of Another's goods.[102] Only God, by nature, is a giver.

3.2 *The Overflowing Perfection of God*

God's sole possession of all things is an aspect of Philo's conception of divine perfection. God's fullness contains all and lacks nothing:

> For the Existent One . . . is full of himself and is sufficient for himself, and is the same before the creation of the world and after the creation of everything. For he is immutable and unchangeable, and needs nothing other at all, so that all things are his, but properly he belongs to no one.[103]

God's perfection means that God is superior to everything else not God, in every way, being both superior to the good and also "the most perfect good" (τελειότατον ἀγαθόν).[104] God is "beyond time and place" and above all created reality in subjection to him.[105] God is thus *sui generis*—classifying him is impossible because no category can contain his perfections.[106] As Winston says, "God's superiority to such attributes undoubtedly signifies for Philo that they are applied to him only equivocally."[107] God is so inexpressible (ἄρρητος) that it is improper to name him: thus, he is revealed as ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν.[108] Consequently, God's essence is unknown but various things can be predicated of his existence.[109]

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102 Yet, as we will see later, Philo sees human giving mostly in a positive light, insofar as it is a reflection of God's giving.

103 *Mut*. 27–28. Cf. *Virt*. 9.

104 *Conf*. 180. Cf. *Decal*. 81.

105 *Post*. 14. Cf. *Conf*. 170; *Congr*. 107.

106 Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 156: Philo often "indulg[es] in flights of negative theology," to extents further than most of predecessors.

107 D. Winston, "Philo's Conception of the Divine Nature," in *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought* (ed. L.E. Goodman; Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 23.

108 Cf. all of *Mut*. 7–30. As R. Radice, "The 'Nameless Principle' from Philo to Plotinus. An Outline of Research," in *Italian Studies on Philo of Alexandria* (ed. F. Calabi; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 174 notes, names in Philo have a "metaphysico-theological foundedness:" God's name, therefore, expresses his being.

109 Cf. *Praem*. 36–46. See *Leg*. 2.2; *Post*. 4–6; *Deus* 55, 57; *Mut*. 3–6. On questions of inconsistency in Philo's arguments—that he believes God is unknowable while still attributing to God so much—see Winston, "Philo's Conception"; and Calabi, *God's Acting*, 17–38. See further *Leg*. 1.51; *Cher*. 67; *Congr*. 61.

God is ἄποιος, without qualities.[110] Furthermore, God's graces[111] and Powers[112] are ἄποιοι, and God's creative activity is making "qualities out of things without qualities" (ἐξ ἀποίων ποιότητας).[113] God's being ἄποιος means he is without "accidental qualities" as the "most generic" of all things (τὸ γενικώτατόν ἐστιν ὁ θεός).[114] Instead of "quality," Philo's preferred term is ἴδιον: there are certain properties that belong particularly to God, and are "derivative" but not defining of his essence.[115] Not to sin, nor to be affected by passions,[116] but rather to act (ἴδιον . . . θεοῦ τὸ ποιεῖν),[117] to "stretch forth good things,"[118] to be tranquil and have stability,[119] and to foretell the future.[120] And, as noted above, being beneficent is an ἴδιον θεοῦ.[121] This list is not exhaustive but hints at how Philo is comfortable predicating certain acts and attributes to God without contradicting God's nature as ἄποιος, and how Philo creates space to make certain claims about God's being.[122]

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110 E.g. *Leg*. 1.36.

111 *Leg*. 2.80.

112 *Spec*. 1.47.

113 *Spec*. 4.187.

114 H.A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Volume 2* (Cambridge: HUP, 1948), 109; *Leg*. 2.86. Cf. also Winston, "Philo's Conception," 22 and Sandmel, *Philo*, 93. As Mann, "Immutability and Predication," 23 argues, this affirmation "conveys, among other things, the belief that no other being is the same kind of being that God is." H. Guyot, *L'infinité divine depuis Philon le juif jusque' à Plotin* (Thèse; Paris, 1906) argued that God is ἄποιος and thus infinite, because he understood ἄποιος to mean "without limit and determination." But as A.-C. Geljon, "Divine Infinity in Gregory of Nyssa and Philo of Alexandria," *VC* 59 (2005): 169–70 says in rebuttal, by "predicating ἄποιος of God, Philo wishes to show that God does not have anything comparable with the human body." Cf. *Leg*. 1.36; 3.36.

115 Winston, "Philo's Conception," 22.

116 Cf. *Fug*. 157; *Virt*. 177; *Deus* 52.

117 *Cher*. 177. Winston, "Philo's Conception," 22 claims Philo "reduces all divine properties to a single one, that of acting." Cf. also Wolfson, *Philo Vol. 2*, 133–34. But acting is not the only ἴδιον Philo attributes to God. Winston seems to say more about the divine essence than Philo felt comfortable doing.

118 *Leg*. 3.105.

119 *Post*. 29.

120 *Somn*. 1.181.

121 *Mut*. 129.

122 Philo does not always distinguish between God the Power and God the Existent One—who "towers in brooding mystery even beyond the Logos (Goodenough, *By Light, Light*, 71)—when he speaks of the ἴδιον of "God." Thus, Philo's saying that beneficence is an ἴδιον of God the Power should not be read as Philo's not making a claim about who the Existent One is. As Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 157 states: "When one has established a totally

God's perfection manifests itself in that God "partakes of nothing other for improvement, but imparts of his own to all particular beings from the fountain of beauty, himself" (τὸ ἴδιον μεταδεδωκὼς ἅπασι τοῖς ἐν μέρει τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ πηγῆς, ἑαυτοῦ).[123] Indeed, Philo says that "the beautiful things in the world would never have been, if they were not represented on an Archetype who is truly beautiful, uncreated, and blessed, and imperishable." For Philo, God is so perfect that, needing nothing, he rather emits, in the manner of a fountain, what is good from his being into creation; and what is emitted is perfect insofar as it is modeled after him. The metaphor of God as a fountain is particularly illuminating.

Philo says that a "fountain is spoken of in many ways," and one of these is "the Creator and Father of the universe" (ὁ τῶν ὅλων ποιητὴς καὶ πατήρ).[124] God is the "highest and best fountain" (περὶ τῆς ἀνωτάτω καὶ ἀρίστης πηγῆς), who spoke about himself through Jeremiah: "They forsook me, the fountain of living water, and dug out broken cisterns for themselves, which will not be able to hold water" (2.13). From this text, Philo argues that God is the "eldest fountain" (ἡ πρεσβυτάτη πηγή) and the world is like rain from him. Thus, he is the fountain of life, for "God alone is the cause of soul and life and especially of rational soul and of the wise life. For matter is dead, but God is something more than life; he is, as he said, the everlasting fountain of living" (πηγὴ τοῦ ζῆν . . . ἀέννaος).[125] Hence, Philo argues that God as a fountain is supremely creative: from creation to the end, all life overflows from God's perfection.

But even more than life itself comes from God. God is also the fountain "from whom . . . all particular goods are showered on the world and those in it" (ἀφ᾽ οὗ τρόπον πηγῆς ἄρδεται τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ τοῖς ἐν αὐτῷ τὰ ἐπὶ μέρους ἀγαθά).[126] Some of these particular goods are Philo's favorite items: virtue, wisdom,

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transcendent God, there straight-way arises in an acute form the problem of his relations with the universe." When Philo speaks of divine giving, he is speaking of the Existent's beneficence through God the Power.

123 *Cher*. 86. Moffatt, *Grace*, 45 claims that the "religious philosophy of Philo had no place for a dynamic conception of 'grace' . . . which he confined to the inner disposition of God as Good or to specific favours bestowed upon mankind in creation and providence." Although God pours out gifts from his being, for Moffatt since God does not give of his own being, Philo does not actually speak of *grace*. Philo's "transcendentalism prevented him from realizing that God could give Himself to men." But this is to measure Philo with a very specific Christian yardstick.

124 *Fug*. 177. Sections 177–201 discuss different meanings of "fountain."

125 *Fug*. 197–98.

126 *Decal*. 81. Cf. *Deus* 155.

justice, reason, and light.[127] This imagery is also connected to God's graces: God says, "I myself am the beginning and fountain of all graces" (ἡ πασῶν χαρίτων ἀρχή τε καὶ πηγὴ αὐτός εἰμι ἐγώ).[128] Similarly, God "pours the everlasting fountains of his graces,"[129] which are so abundant that they would easily overflow the earth.[130] Beyond the specific language of God as ἡ πηγή, Philo coordinates God's perfection with his beneficence more generally. God has "showered on heaven and earth the particular good things" because he himself is "the good," indeed, is "full of perfect goods" (πλήρης ἀγαθῶν τελείων).[131] Since God is the perfect good, humans cannot benefit God in any way, for God is full in himself (ὁ πλήρης θεός) and needs nothing. Consequently, rather than being benefitted (ὠφελεῖται γὰρ ὑπ' οὐδενός), he is "continually and unceasingly benefitting all things" (τὰ σύμπαντα συνεχῶς καὶ ἀπαύστως ὠφελεῖ). Accordingly, humans should draw near to him and benefit from his perfection.[132] God's act of creating was a giving of his own nature to a nature that had no beauty in itself,[133] and thus, though "perfection is found in no created thing," it does appear in them through the "gift of the Cause."[134]

God's perfection sets him apart from humanity in every way: God is everything good that humanity in itself is not. But this perfection that distinguishes God from humanity is also what causes him to overflow with gifts to humanity, first in creating the universe and then in supporting, nourishing, and leading creation back to his perfection. We saw in relation to God as Cause and Creator that only the good could be attributed to God, and the same is applicable here. But whereas earlier Philo left the good attributed to God simply as whatever is good, here the good is only the highest, or most perfect, of goods: life, virtue, wisdom, etc. God's perfection leads him to give perfect gifts, in that he is perfect to such a degree that he naturally overflows with goods from, and consonant with, his own being.[135]

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127 *Spec*. 1.303; 277. Cf. *Mut*. 3–6; *Post*. 127; QG 4.8; *Cher*. 86–90; *Fug*. 97; *Post*. 69, 136; *Somn*. 1.115. On God as archetypal light, see *Somn*. 1.72–76; *Praem*. 45–46; *Mut*. 6; *Cher*. 96–97.

128 *Mut*. 58.

129 *Cher*. 123. Cf. *Virt*. 79.

130 *Ebr*. 32.

131 *Spec*. 2.53.

132 *Det*. 54–56. On Plato's *Euthyphro* as a potential background for this text, see J. Glucker, "Piety, Dogs and a Platonic Reminiscence: Philo, Quod Deterius 54–56 and Plato, Euthyphro 12e–15a," *Illinois Classical Studies* 18 (1993): 131–38.

133 *Opif*. 21.

134 *Plant*. 93.

135 Speaking of God's justice, Goodenough, *By Light, Light*, 62 notes that in one passage Philo does not simply say "God Himself is just," but rather affirms that "God is αὐταρκέστατος

3.3 *A Bountiful God*

Consequently, for Philo, God is φιλόδωρος: a lover of gifts and giving, a bountiful God. As we have seen, this is why God creates: "Why did he create that which did not exist? Because he was good and loves to give" (ὅτι ἀγαθὸς καὶ φιλόδωρος ἦν).[136] God creates because he is φιλόδωρος and his continuing activity is giving: it is "fitting for him to bestow his graces and gifts and benefactions as he is good and bountiful by nature."[137] φιλόδωρος is thus not simply a description of what God does, but of who God is immutably; God is generous in himself. Philo makes this sentiment clear in his writings with his frequent use of φιλόδωρος, which appears twenty-five times.[138] Similarly, Philo calls God ὁ μόνος πάμπλουτος θεός,[139] or "wealth bringing" (πλουτοφόρος) and "munificent" (μεγαλόδωρος).[140] Yet, while Philo emphatically depicts God as a generous giver, he knows that this is difficult to understand: "What soul could ever suppose that the Master and Ruler of the universe, without changing anything of his own nature, but remaining the same, is continually good and bountiful without ceasing" (ἀγαθός ἐστι συνεχῶς καὶ φιλόδωρος ἀνελλιπῶς)? This disjunction between God's being φιλόδωρος and human incomprehension leads Philo to doxology: "O bountiful God, your unlimited graces have no boundary or end, pouring forth like fountains!"[141]

God's giving is entirely due to his own generosity—nothing else explains it—and is immeasurably abundant. Accordingly, Philo often speaks of God's gifts such that they are "unlimited and have no boundary or end" (ἀπερίγραφοι καὶ ὅρον ἢ τελευτὴν οὐκ ἔχουσαι).[142] While this implies an exhaustive quantitative or spatial aspect, Philo is equally insistent on their temporal infinitude. God's fountains are of "everlasting gifts" (πηγὰς τῶν ἀεννάων αὐτοῦ χαρίτων)[143]

ἑαυτῷ, entirely sufficient unto Himself, and then makes Him the πηγὴ δικαιοσύνης." The same logic holds true here: standing behind any statement that "God is generous" is the affirmation that God is perfect in himself, containing and possessing all things, from which he gives. For Goodenough, however, the point is that justice is not part of God's nature; but being generous is.

136 *Mut*. 46.

137 *Fug*. 66.

138 In addition to the texts already cited, see *Leg*. 3.106, 166; *Cher*. 20, 29; *Det*. 138; *Post*. 26; *Agr*. 173; *Plant*. 37, 88, 91; *Ebr*. 82; *Fug*. 62; *Abr*. 254; *Spec*. 1.221, 298; *Praem*. 126. φιλόδωρος can also be used of the Powers; cf. *Conf*. 182.

139 *Migr*. 121.

140 *Congr*. 171. See also *Post*. 32, where God is πλουτοδότης.

141 *Her*. 31. φιλόδωρος is used here substantively; cf. also *Leg*. 3.40; *Migr*. 30.

142 *Her*. 31. Cf. *Sacr*. 124; *Leg*. 3.39.

143 *Conf*. 182. Cf. *Plant*. 91; *Spec*. 1.285; *Spec*. 2.180.

as the fountains from which God's gifts flow are themselves also everlasting (τὰς τῶν χαρίτων αὐτοῦ πηγὰς ἀενάους).[144] In essence, then, God gives gifts appropriate to his being: "God wills to give great and immortal things instead of small and perishable (ἀντὶ μικρῶν καὶ φθαρτῶν μεγάλα καὶ ἀθάνατα χαρίζεσθαι), and this work is appropriate for him."[145] "All of God's gifts are good" (δωρεαὶ δ' αἱ τοῦ θεοῦ καλαὶ πᾶσαι).[146]

Philo speaks about the purity of God's gifts most clearly in his use of personified Graces (Χάριτες).[147] Three points explain Philo's understanding of the Graces while also demonstrating that personifications—not simply plural gifts—are in view. First, the Graces are called God's virgin daughters (παρθένοι θυγατέρες).[148] As Philo asks, "How then may any good be wanting when the all-accomplishing God is present with his Graces, his virgin daughters (μετὰ χαρίτων τῶν παρθένων αὐτοῦ θυγατέρων), which the Father begat uncorrupted and undefiled?"[149] The Graces are so pure that they are "immaterial, being themselves ideas and without qualities" (ἄυλοι, ἰδέαι, ἄποιοι).[150] This signals that "die Wohltaten unverfälscht von Nebenabsichten sein sollen."[151]

Second, the Graces represent God. Those who seek God's nature will not seek what is imperfect because God will honor them by "going forward to meet because of his merciful nature *in his virgin Graces* and displaying himself

144 *Virt*. 79; *Cher*. 123.

145 *Mut*. 79; *Migr*. 73.

146 *Post*. 80; cf. *Migr*. 181–83; *Congr*. 182.

147 For background, see Zeller, *Charis*, 17–18.

148 Cf. e.g. *Post*. 32; *Migr*. 30–31; *Fug*. 141; *QE* 2.61; *Mos*. 2.7. Harrison, *Grace*, 123 (and n. 142) believes this attribution "may have bordered on the mythological" for Philo's readers, because παρθένος was "an epithet used elsewhere . . . to the 'virgin' Χάριτες, the daughters of Zeus." Contrast A. Jaubert, *La notion d'alliance dans le judaïsme aux abords de l'ère chrétienne* (Paris, 1963), 431, for whom the appellation aggrandizes the utter purity of God's grace. Harrison notes that hypostasized "virgin" graces might have caught his reader's attention, but with Jaubert I do not believe Philo develops this idea enough to call *Philo's* use of it "mythological." Yet, Harrison is correct: "to dub grace παρθένος—even if Philo's use is symbolic—was bold on his part" (124). Zeller, *Charis*, 18 strikes the right balance: Philo "liebt gelegentliche Anspielungen auf die griechische Mythologie, setzt aber die stoische Allegorese der Göttinnen voraus." See further Y. Amir, "Philo's Religious Interpretation of a Philosophical Concept," *Imm* 17 (1983): 22–29; Y. Amir, "The Transference of Greek Allegories to Biblical Motifs in Philo," in *Nourished with Peace: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of Samuel Sandmel* (ed. F.E. Greenspahn; Chico: Scholars Press, 1984), 18–20; Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 152–53.

149 *Migr*. 30–31.

150 *Leg*. 2.80.

151 Zeller, *Charis*, 34.

(προϋπαντῶντος διὰ τὴν ἵλεω φύσιν ἑαυτοῦ ταῖς παρθένοις χάρισι καὶ ἐπιδεικνυμένου ἑαυτόν) to those who are eager to see."[152] God cannot be seen as he is, thus he employs his Graces by going forth and being displayed in them.[153] It is significant that Philo understands personified *gifts* as representatives of God,[154] in the way seen in God's relation to the Powers.

Third, the Graces correspond to particular human natures. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—allegorically those who learn by instruction, nature, and practice—are what "people call by another name, the three Graces." Philo says this naming is either from God's having given (κεχαρίσθαι) the natures to humans or because "they have given themselves" (αὗται δεδώρηνται . . . ἑαυτάς).[155] God's giving to effect "perfection of life" corresponds with the Graces' giving so that the "eternal name" would be used in conjunction with these natures and not three humans: God of Abraham (instruction), Isaac (nature), and Jacob (practice).[156] Accordingly, the three Graces reflect the gifting of virtuous natures to humans by which humans are able to be further gifted.[157]

Hence, the Graces signify the purity of God's gifts and their close relation to him. Likewise, the Graces correspond to certain human natures that, if possessed, make the recipient worthy of further gifting—though the reception of the nature is itself a gift. It is these Graces that God "rains down" (ὕοντος τοῦ πλουτοδότου θεοῦ τὰς παρθένους καὶ ἀθανάτους χάριτας αὐτοῦ),[158] as the "perfect gifts of God" are inspired by the "most ancient Graces."[159]

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152 *Fug*. 141. As Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 163 notes, Philo can often "equate" the Graces with God's beneficent Power, which is the same kind of move found in Stoics like Cornutus.

153 Cf. *Fug*. 141–42. Zeller, *Charis*, 34 asks: "Will er mit dem Attribut die Initiative Gottes unterstreichen?" He answers: "Philon interessieren die χάριτες nicht in erster Linie als zwischenmenschliche Vollzüge, sondern als Äußerungen Gottes." But are the Graces not "Äußerungen Gottes" that emphasize "die Initiative Gottes"? The distinction seems unnecessary.

154 Cf. also *QE*. 2.61.

155 *Abr*. 54. Cf. S. Sandmel, *Philo's Place in Judaism: A Study of Conceptions of Abraham in Jewish Literature* (New York: Ktav Publishing, 1971), 143: "the capacities, as part of the endowment of the individual are innate; as 'graces,' they are the gift of God, or else, Philo tells us, the gift to the reasonable soul from the capacity itself." Cf. also Noack, "Haben oder Empfangen," 288.

156 Cf. also *Mos*. 2.7.

157 Cf. M.D. van Veldhuizen, "'Philanthropia' in Philo of Alexandria: A Scriptural Perspective" (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 1982), 87: "The three Graces, then . . . are part of the accommodation of God to man's understanding."

158 *Post*. 32.

159 *Congr*. 138.

3.4 *Conclusion*

The preceding sections have built to this point. All aspects of Philo's understanding of God start general and universal: God causes, creates, overflows in perfection, and thus gives—*everything*. God is φιλόδωρος because he is creator and perfect in himself, owning all things in his fullness. That is, the various aspects discussed in section two are dependent on section one, as section one leads to two. But each aspect has to be qualified. God causes and creates, but only the good. Likewise, God gives everything and gives generously, but there are particular reasons why he gives. Consequently, the question lurks, why and to whom does God give? God's hyper-generous nature has to be disambiguated in actual acts of giving. Philo's concept of divine beneficence has given some interpreters problems in understanding how he can describe God's giving in "typical" (i.e. Pauline) ways, such that grace is unwarranted and undeserved. Yet then he explains that God gives according to worth and the capacity of the human receiving the gift.[160] I will now try to set forth both strands and propose an explanation of how they fit together—and according to Philo, they simply *do* fit together—though this task will stretch through the next chapter. In Philo's mind, that God is a profligately generous giver who gives according to worth holds in balance two ideas: God is generous and he is also wise and rational.

160 Conzelmann, "Χάρις," 390 summarizes well: "some see in Philo a 'Catholic' vacillation between grace and man's own work, while others speak of Hell.-Jewish synergism to the degree that grace is in fact a help in the attainment of virtue." See an overview of major interpretations in Zeller, *Charis*, 65–72. Zeller specifically highlights Windisch, *Frömmigkeit Philos*, for whom the "demand of the Law" drives incapable humans to God's mercy, and W. Völker, *Fortschritt und Vollendung bei Philo von Alexandrien: Eine Studie zur Geschichte der Frömmigkeit* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs Verlag, 1938), for whom Philo is a "naïver Synergist." As will become clear, neither a Protestant law-versus-grace scheme nor synergism make sense of Philo's view. Of course, some interpreters find it simply incredible that Philo actually speaks of *grace*: cf. e.g., Carson, "Divine Sovereignty," 160–62; VanLandingham, *Judgment and Justification*, 27. N.G. Cohen, "Context and Connotation. Greek Words for Jewish Concepts in Philo," in *Shem in the Tents of Japhet: Essays on the Encounter of Judaism and Hellenism* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 60 demonstrates how a number of terms were used "by early Christianity to express its own agenda in the language of Judaism," which is thus "why these words have so often been misconstrued by scholars of Philo."

4 God's Perfect and Incommensurate Giving

In the first section I explained why everything has its origin in God, and in the second section I elaborated on the nature of God's generous being; in this section, then, I will set forth some important clarifications for how God actually goes about giving. The tension we have seen in the last two sections—everything comes from God *as gift*, but only the good comes from God—is sublimated into a new issue here. If God is the bountiful source of all things, and everything is gift, does God give to all people indiscriminately? The principle I suggested in the introduction—that God is wise and rational—has interacted with the first two axioms primarily by qualifying *what* God gives (e.g. God causes and creates only the good, only pure gifts overflow from his perfection). However, the principle is at work most clearly in the third axiom, for here it qualifies *how* God gives and *to whom*, though even here it is in tension with the uncontainable generosity of God's being—the asymmetrical divine-human relationship. For Philo, it is important that God not only be unbounded in generosity but also wise and rational in his creating and giving, instilling order in creation and not transgressing that order in giving. Thus, because God is a perfect giver, he gives both rationally (according to order) and incommensurately (according to his being).

4.1 *"And Noah Found Grace before the Lord God"*

We can set out many themes of Philo's concept of God's giving by describing two passages where Philo interprets Genesis 6.8, the first occurrence of χάρις in the LXX: "Noah found grace before the Lord God" (Νωε δὲ εὗρεν χάριν ἐναντίον κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ).[161] *Leg*. 3.78–106 and *Deus* 86–110 present clearly two sides of Philo's thought—excessive and calculated giving—which could seem to be in tension.[162]

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161 As Calabi, *God's Acting*, 19 n. 13 remarks, χάρις here "is undoubtedly a complex and polyvalent [term] . . . it is precisely this multivalency which is indicative of the different levels at which Philo's argument is set." On the semantic shifts in χάρις throughout *Deus* 86–110, see Calabi 21 n.23. Conzelmann, "Χάρις," 389 claims that "χάρις is never a theological word in the LXX," which is wrong in whatever sense Conzelmann means by "theological." Certainly, for Philo, χάρις in Gen 6.8—and everywhere else in the LXX—is absolutely theological.

162 A third interpretation can be found in *QG* 1.96. Here Philo explains that Noah found grace because he was grateful, while all others were not.

In *Leg*. 3.78–106, Philo discusses various kinds of God-given natural endowments.[163] Before, in sections 65–76, Philo explained why the Serpent (Pleasure) was given no chance to defend itself but Eve (Sense Perception) was. Sense Perception is neither good nor bad in itself, but depends on how it is used by Man (Mind).[164] Since it is not inherently bad, it is allowed to defend itself. Pleasure, however, is "wretched of itself (ἐξ ἑαυτῆς ἐστι μοχθηρά); and therefore there is no reason to let it defend itself, because its presence necessitates a guilty verdict. Philo concludes that God has created in the soul some natures "faulty and blameworthy" and others "excellent and praiseworthy."[165] This is what precedes and concludes this interpretation of Gen 6.8.

Consequently, Philo says that if anyone asks what Gen 6.8 means, that "Noah found favor before the Lord God" without doing anything prior (μηδὲν πρότερον ἐργασάμενον),[166] the answer is that Noah has a "praiseworthy constitution and nature, for Noah means 'rest' or 'righteous.'"[167] It is necessary (ἀνάγκη) that such a nature finds favor with God, and what Noah finds is that God has given all things (χάριν ὄντα τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ σύμπαντα), that grace is only suitably attributed to God (διὸ καὶ μόνου τὴν χάριν οἰκεῖον). God created because of his "goodness and grace"—for "all things in the world and the world itself are a gift and benefit and favor of God" (δωρεὰ γὰρ καὶ εὐεργεσία καὶ χάρισμα θεοῦ τὰ πάντα ὅσα ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ κόσμος ἐστί).[168] Noah finds grace because his nature—not actions—constitutes him as worthy.

The successive sections follow a similar pattern:[169] a person receives something from God—apparently without doing anything to deserve it—so Philo locates the gift's appropriateness in the person's nature as seen in the person's

163 Cf. Borgen, *Exegete*, 51–56 on the form of this passage, as one of Philo's many "lists of biblical examples."

164 See also *Cher*. 58–60.

165 For whatever reason, for Philo, saying that God creates souls with bad natures is not the same as attributing evil to God. Carson, "Divine Sovereignty," 156 is correct that Philo does not solve the problem of the origin of evil or divine sovereignty/human freedom.

166 Or, "at least as far as we know" (ὅσα γε εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν ἐπίγνωσιν).

167 *Leg*. 3.77.

168 *Leg*. 3.78.

169 Philo moves from verse to verse to make sense of Gen 6.8; D.T. Runia, "The Structure of Philo's Allegorical Treatises: A Review of Two Recent Studies and Some Additional Comments," *VC* 38 (1984): 238 thus distinguishes between "primary exegesis, which concentrates on direct exegesis of the main biblical lemma, and . . . secondary exegesis, which gives exegesis of subordinate biblical lemma to the extent the exegete deems fit for the full understanding of the main biblical text." In some texts there is even a "Tertiary

name.[170] The enigmatic Melchizedek is the "King of Peace" and God's own Priest not because of any prefigured work (οὐδὲν ἔργον αὐτοῦ προδιατυπώσας) but because God makes Melchizedek worthy (ἄξιος) of these positions and attributions first (πρῶτον), as they reflect the meaning of his name.[171]

Philo frontloads the issue with regard to Abram: "But what good had Abram already done" that prompted God's call to leave his fatherland? The land is an example of God's "great and precious gifts," but Abram does nothing to merit it, because beforehand "God begat this character having an image worthy of zeal" (ἐγέννησε τύπον ἔχοντα σπουδῆς ἄξιον).[172] Abram's name means "lofty father," being one who soars high and contemplates God and his nature, in line with his God-given nature.[173] Similarly, Isaac was "molded and appointed and chosen to have the best lot before birth."[174] Isaac's name was determined before birth (cf. Gen 17.19) and thus both nature and name were given to Isaac before birth, before doing anything, and so provide appropriate grounds for God's praise.

The choice of Jacob is handled differently. God's foreknowledge of the nature and future deeds of Jacob and Esau determines his judgment on them. Philo states: "for altogether, a certain small breeze of virtue evidences rule and authority, not freedom alone, and by contrast, the ordinary existence of wickedness enslaves the reason, even if its offspring are not fully developed."[175] There is a hint of virtue and vice in utero in Jacob and Esau, respectively, and God's actions reflect that.[176]

Bezalel is the final character discussed to whom God gave without a clear reason why in the text (cf. Ex 31.2ff.). For Philo, this must mean that "God

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Biblical Lemma"—a third layer of biblical exegesis that helps to explain the *secondary* exegesis. See Runia and Geljon, *On Cultivation*, 10.

170 Cf. Barclay, "Grace Within and Beyond," 10: "The seven figures in this catalogue . . . vary a little in detail, but have in common the fact that some divine blessing or promise was given to them before the text records any work." As J.K. Riches, "Paul, Grace and Freedom: A Response," in *Paul, Grace and Freedom*, 195 comments, Philo attempts to "discern the hidden rationale of God's gift-giving, that which renders the recipient worthy of such a gift and the gift appropriate to the receiver."

171 *Leg*. 3.79–80.

172 Cf. Sandmel, *Philo's Place*, 144–45.

173 *Leg*. 3.83–84.

174 *Leg*. 3.85–87.

175 *Leg*. 3.89. For a reading of this text in dialogue with Paul in Romans 9, see Barclay, "Grace Within and Beyond."

176 Cf. *Leg*. 3.90–94 on Ephraim and Manasseh.

engraved on this form in the soul in the manner of an approved coin."[177] The key to understanding this engraving is in Bezalel's name, which means "in the shadow of God." Since God's shadow is the Logos, the Logos was impressed upon Bezalel. Philo then contrasts two kinds of people: those who know God, the Artificer, from his works—"through a shadow" (Bezalel)—and those who have a clear vision of God and his shadow (Moses).[178] Bezalel is a character gifted because of his nature, but even his gifting pales in comparison to Moses.

Philo thus states: "we have found there are two natures created and molded and engraved completely by God," one blameworthy and one praiseworthy.[179] This leads to Moses' prayer for God to "open for us his own treasury" (Deut 28.12) and to close the treasuries of evil things.[180] Philo is constrained to believe that God has treasuries of both good and evil because of Deut 32.34–35, but God's goodness means that the treasuries of evil are left closed: "For it is God's ἴδιον to bestow good things and to give in anticipation (φθάνειν δωρούμενον), but to be slow in bringing evil things."[181] Since God is a "lover of gifts and bounteous" (φιλόδωρος καί χαριστικός), God keeps the treasuries of evil sealed even when "the soul falls out of step with right reason, even when it was fitting to consider it worthy of punishment" (ὁπότε καὶ ἄξιον ἦν αὐτὴν δίκης ἀξιοῦσθαι).[182] God will provide "time for repentance and the fixing of the false step and restoration."

Philo is concerned to safeguard the appropriateness of God's generosity—that God gives *for a reason*, to fitting recipients. We see in this passage a logic for why God gives, which is that those who are worthy to receive have been given a worthy nature by God *beforehand*. God is characterized as one who does not give haphazardly but to the ἄξιοι (cf. 79, 83, 106; ἀξιόω in 87, 93, 94, 106). Yet it is God who molds and shapes their natures into a worthy state: God's giving is why the recipients are worthy of the gift. Philo does not see in this logic a simple determinism;[183] it is an opportunity to praise God for his munificent

177 *Leg*. 3.95.

178 Cf. *Leg*. 3.97–103.

179 *Leg*. 3.104.

180 Borgen, *Exegete*, 54 calls this a "didactic epilogue."

181 *Leg*. 3.105.

182 *Leg*. 3.106.

183 Sandmel, "Abraham's Knowledge," 138; contrast Knox, "Quest for God." For the larger issue, see also H.A. Wolfson, "Philo on Free Will. And the Historical Influence of His View," *HTR* 35 (1942): 131–69 and the rebuttal by D. Winston, "Freedom and Determinism in Philo of Alexandria," *StPhA* 3 (1975): 47–70. Winston argues that "the general tone of Philo's ethical thought is evidently deterministic" (70), which is likely right. Since God alone is cause and active, and humans are passive, there is necessarily a sense of God's controlling all things. Accordingly, Winston affirms a "relative free will," but not absolute free will (so

nature and to pray for God's continual support and mercy.[184] Everything is thus attributed to God, even the conditions that God gives to humans by which he gives gifts.

In *Deus* 86–110, Philo begins by differentiating between "finding" (εὕρεσις) and "re-finding" (ἀνεύρεσις).[185] The "Great Vow" is an example of ἀνεύρεσις—indicative of an understanding that "God himself and by himself is the cause of good things," though it may appear that the Earth produces them.[186] An example of εὕρεσις is the gift of cities and houses (Deut 6.10–11),[187] which symbolically represent "generic and specific virtues."[188] The way these gifts are received is likened to a person waking from sleep to find a gift—an unexpected discovery.[189] Likewise, it is also a toil-free discovery for the naturally blessed soul, in contrast to those who labor and work, the "sluggish and slow of soul."[190] This latter group renders insincere worship to God because they are impious.

This contrast—between those who find grace easily and recognize God as cause, and the impure who toil but never find—sets up the discussion of Noah.

Wolfson). Consequently, while *Leg*. 3.78–106 does not evince a simple determinism, it is clear here that God has predetermined worth. This point is one generally underestimated by those who attribute a "merit theology" to Philo. Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 166 acutely states that Philo "[l]ike any other Platonist . . . must resist Stoic determinism, and yet reconcile the doctrine of the freedom of the will with that of the Providence of God." Dillon points to *Cher*. 128 as a passage against which every affirmation of free will in Philo must be read. One thing all sides agree on, however, is that humans only choose to do what is good because of God's gift of the Logos at work in them. What to do with evil, as already noted, remains an open question. See e.g. H.A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Volume 1* (Cambridge: HUP, 1947), 446–47. Cf. Zeller, *Charis*, 72: "Das ist die Konsequenz der Allwirksamkeit des Schöpfers, daß jede anscheinende Tätigkeit des Menschen zum Guten in Wahrheit Tat Gottes in creatio continua ist."

184 Cf. Borgen, *Exegete*, 54.

185 On this distinction, see D.T. Runia, "Mosaic and Platonist Exegesis: Philo on 'Finding' and 'Refinding'," *VC* 40 (1986): 209–17. For a helpful breakdown of Philo's exegetical moves and transitions in this text, see Runia, "Structure," 242–43.

186 *Deus* 86–87. Borgen, *Exegete*, 117 explains that Philo's use of the Great Vow gives "a needed specification of the contexts indicated in the answer."

187 D. Gooding and V. Nikiprowetzky, "Philo's Bible in the De Gigantibus and Quod Deus," in *Two Treatises of Philo of Alexandria* (ed. D. Winston and J. Dillon; Chico: Scholars Press, 1983), 94–118 provide a full discussion of Philo's citations in this text.

188 *Deus* 95.

189 Cf. *Deus* 92–93, 97–98.

190 See also *Fug*. 120–77, where Philo discusses the difference between "finding" and "seeking." For a comparison of these two passages, see Winston and Dillon, *Two Treatises*, 321.

Earlier, in 70ff., Philo had already set Noah apart as one who exists by God's grace, while the evil exist by God's wrath. God does not annihilate humanity because of his goodness, as Noah's finding grace allows for God to "mix saving mercy with the judgment against sinners." Philo quotes Psalm 100.1 for corroboration and reflects further on the relation, and predominance, of divine mercy over judgment; but the point is that Noah is under God's grace vis-à-vis the rest of humanity and is thus properly considered someone who "finds grace."

Philo proposes two possibilities for the meaning of Noah's finding grace. First, that Noah "obtained grace" (χάριτος ἔτυχεν), which Philo considers unreasonable since Noah received nothing beyond what all others have (τί γὰρ αὐτῷ πλέον δεδώρηται πάντων). All other beings, even "simple elementary natures," have been considered worthy of divine grace (χάριτος ἠξιωμένων θείας).[191] Second, that "the Cause judges worthy of his gifts (κρίνοντος τοῦ αἰτίου δωρεῶν ἀξίους) those who do not destroy the divine coin in them . . . with disgraceful practices."[192] But Philo wavers, "perhaps this is not true."[193] Philo's reasoning is important: "For how great must a person be who will be judged worthy of grace before God? For I hardly consider that the whole world could obtain such a thing, and yet the world is indeed the first and greatest and most perfect of the divine works."[194] Noah could not have deserved God's grace, because not even the world itself is worthy of it; in fact, *nothing* and *no one* is worthy of God's grace.[195] All have been considered worthy of divine grace, but none are inherently worthy of it.

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191 *Deus* 104.

192 *Deus* 105.

193 Thus, Windisch, *Frömmigkeit Philos*, 18 states: "Heilige Menschen der Vorzeit scheinen vor anderen das Prädikat der Würdigkeit zu verdienen; Philo erteilt es ihnen auch gelegentlich; aber an anderen Orten steigen ihm Bedenken auf, und er nimmt sein Wort zurück." We might say, however, that the issue is from which perspective Philo is approaching the topic, not whether Philo "takes back" his word. If Philo needs to emphasize the rationality of God's beneficence, then Noah must be worthy; if he needs to emphasize the incommensurable nature of God's generosity, then Noah is unworthy. Human worth or unworth is a secondary consideration to proper speech about God.

194 According to Zeller, *Charis*, 35, this moving of "das gnädige Walten Gottes" away from the individual and into "den Kosmos und seine Anfänge" evidences Stoic influence.

195 *Pace* Harrison, *Grace*, 124, one cannot simply say that "χάρις is restricted to those who are ἄξιοι." Even though God typically gives to the worthy, how worth is constituted is not straightforward—the statement needs more nuance.

A third option is deemed the most appropriate. Noah is the "cultivated individual"[196] (ὁ ἀστεῖος) who has searched and found the greatest truth: "all things are a gift of God" (χάριν ὄντα θεοῦ τὰ πάντα). Philo goes on:

> God has given nothing to himself for he needs nothing, but the world to the world and its parts to each other and one another, and also to the universe. Although considering nothing worthy of grace, he has given good things in abundance to the whole (world) and to all its parts, rather looking to his eternal goodness[197] and thinking that to give benefits belongs to his blessed and happy nature.[198]

Everything is a gift given from God not because anyone deserves it, but because God is generous. Consequently, Philo explicates Noah's finding grace as discovering that everything exists because of God's grace and that everything is grace. Philo sets God's beneficence over worth: humans are not worthy to receive—not even the world, the greatest good, is worthy.[199] As God creates because of his goodness, he gives because of his goodness and not because

196 Philo is concerned to be faithful to the text—that Noah was a "righteous man, perfect among his generation" who "pleased God" (Gen 6.9)—while upholding the truism that ultimately no one is deserving of divine generosity. His understanding of Noah as ὁ ἀστεῖος is one way of balancing the two. L.H. Feldman, "Questions About the Great Flood, as Viewed by Philo, Pseudo-Philo, Josephus, and the Rabbis," *ZAW* 115 (2003): 414 points out Philo's worry that the text calls Noah "righteous" without providing any examples of righteous actions. On Gen 6.8–9 and Noah's worthiness in Philo and other Jewish authors, see L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Noah and Its Parallels in Philo, Pseudo-Philo's 'Biblical Antiquities', and Rabbinic Midrashim," *PAAJR* 55 (1998): 43–44.

197 Winston and Dillon, *Two Treatises*, 331 say this is "an adaptation of the Demiurge's looking to the Paradigm." This broaches the issue of whether God creates/gives by "looking to eternal goodness" as something proper to his being or external to it. Cf. Calabi, *God's Acting*, 24: "In the first case, the supreme Being watches Himself as He carries out an action and holds that this is worthy of determination; in the second case, what He is looking to is a power that seems to have some sort of role as an autonomous being. Both hypotheses pose a problem." The former problematizes divine simplicity, while the latter hypostasizes something essential to God's nature. Calabi thinks the problem cannot finally be solved, though she argues that God "looks to the eternal goodness that is within God's mind and is ἀΐδιον." For our purposes, the point is that the initiative is with God, not the human.

198 Zeller, *Charis*, 36 calls this "ontologische Gnade."

199 And yet, Moses *is* worthy! Cf. *Deus* 109–10.

of any external cause or condition.[200] God's overflowing generosity cannot be bound in any way in this interpretation of Gen 6.8. Grace causes grace.

Are these interpretations of Genesis 6.8 inconsistent?[201] In the briefer *Deus* interpretation, Philo passes over worth by concluding that nothing is worthy. In *Leg*., God gives precisely according to the worth that God establishes. In this chapter and the next, I will argue that these two ideas are not in tension—not that Philo never contradicts himself!—and that they fit together when viewed against the backdrop of Philo's larger doctrine of God. My basic argument is that God can give in an orderly fashion only because of his prior overflowing generosity. In and of themselves, no created being can ever be worthy of God's gifts unless God himself imbues the person with worth in an act of creation. God's grace is prior to and causative of human worth. Thus, in their own ways, both expositions point to the importance of human worth for Philo. We will now examine more methodically how Philo describes these two aspects of God's giving before systematizing them. Philo does not spell out how the two aspects cohere, but this does not mean that that coherence cannot be explained.

4.2 *God's Overflowing and Orderly Giving: A Preliminary Sketch*

4.2.1 Overflowing Giving

Creation itself is an act of overflowing giving, according to no external worth or condition beyond God's generosity. Philo believes that the world itself is also then unable to contain God's immeasurable gifts, like a shallow channel filled to overflowing.[202] Indeed, God bestows gifts "always and incessantly," never missing a chance to give.[203] Philo makes many sweeping statements about God's universal blessings: God has "showered particular goods on heaven and

200 *Leg*. 3.78. As Runia, *Timaeus*, 133 states, "Grace to the righteous man is placed in the larger context of grace to the entire cosmos, of which man is part."

201 As noted above, many believe they are. Cf. Moffatt, *Grace*, 49:

> "Grace comes freely to any man, not for the sake of merit on his part, and yet somehow the reception of it does depend upon a certain capacity. How these two truths are to be reconciled, we are not told. . . . for the first time the consciousness of this antinomy begins to be felt in his pages, perhaps more by his readers than by himself." Almost precisely the same thing is found in É. Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie* (2nd ed.; Paris, 1925), 278, who calls this tension "la contradiction fondamentale" with which subsequent thinkers have to deal. Cf. also Windisch, *Frömmigkeit Philos*, 17.

202 *Ebr*. 31–32.

203 *Plant*. 89.

earth,"[204] and as a benefactor "gives out a bountiful abundance of goods to every part of the universe."[205] Thus, "no one is in lack" for all have the "interminable riches of nature for a supplier," and "all everywhere enjoy in great abundance."[206] God provides the things necessary for life to all, as he gives life to each individual: Philo testifies, "he has given me to myself and every living person to himself."[207] If Philo apprehends *everything* as gift, the correlation is that gifts are given to all, sometimes despite the recipient's unworthiness. Thus, Philo can immediately disqualify the reading that Noah found grace as a worthy individual, for Noah's discovery is actually the gift-nature of *all things*.[208] But these texts do not assert anything past a common gifting; is there more that all people enjoy beyond their mere existence?[209]

Elsewhere, Philo occasionally speaks of God's giving *in spite* of unworthiness. For example, in the creation account Philo questions why the divine breath is given to the earthly man and not the heavenly man who is made after God's image.[210] Philo answers that "God, being bountiful, gives good things to all, even those who are not perfect (φιλόδωρος ὢν ὁ θεὸς χαρίζεται τὰ ἀγαθὰ πᾶσι καὶ τοῖς μὴ τελείοις), calling them forth into participation and zeal for virtue and at the same time exhibiting his excessive riches, because this

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204 *Spec*. 2.53.

205 *Legat*. 118. Cf. *Decal*. 81, 178. For Philo, giver and benefactor are two appellations that interpret the same reality. Philo uses the εὐεργ- word group no less than 156 times to describe God (εὐεργέτης), how God acts (εὐεργετικός), and what God gives (εὐεργεσία). Note the way gifts and benefits are often listed together: e.g. *Fug*. 66; *Plant*. 89. For a discussion of benefaction in Philo, see Harrison, *Grace*, 120–33; see also J.H. Neyrey, "God, Benefactor and Patron: The Major Cultural Model for Interpreting the Deity in Greco-Roman Antiquity," *JSNT* 27 (2005): 465–92.

206 *Virt*. 6. Cf. differently *Migr*. 31–32.

207 *Somn*. 2.224. Cf. *Spec*. 2.198.

208 *Deus* 104–06.

209 Zeller, *Charis*, 34–35 rightly notes that Philo, like the Stoics, distinguished between "'großen Geschenk Gottes,' das jeder bei der Geburt vorfindet, der vollständigen Welt und den 'speziellen Geschenken', die Gott gibt und die Menschen frei empfangen."

210 On Philo's understanding of the two men, see A.J.M. Wedderburn, "Philo's 'Heavenly Man'," *NovT* 15 (1973): 301–26. For whether this tradition was used by Paul, see the conflicting essays of B. Schaller, "Adam und Christus bei Paulus: oder: Über Brauch und Fehlbrauch von Philo in der neutestamentlichen Forschung," in *Philo und das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen, 1. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus Judeo-Hellenisticum* (ed. R. Deines and K.-W. Niebuhr; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 143–53 and S. Nordgaard, "Paul's Appropriation of Philo's Theory of 'Two Men' in 1 Corinthians 15.45–49," *NTS* 57 (2011): 348–65. Tobin, *Creation of Man* provides the fullest exposition of the creation of humans in Philo.

suffices for those who will not be greatly benefited by it."[211] God causes rain to fall upon the springs in the desert, which gives no real benefit and does nothing but prove the "abundance of his own riches and goodness." For this reason, "no soul [is] barren of good, even if the use of the good may be impossible to some." Accordingly, the earthly man is a type of unworthy recipient: the gift does not fit but constitutes the recipient as worthy, drawing the recipient towards a better status. God gives to the unworthy because of his generosity and despite their unworthiness, from a desire to see the unworthy become worthy. Since God's gifts have this causative function, there can be an inherent sense of a lack of fit to his gifts. By giving, God instills desire for virtue, the possession of which makes the beneficence fitting. All originally stand in need of this proto-gifting and thus all receive gifts. Hence, parents do not overlook their "unruly children" but rather care for them and often "give in abundance more to these than the self-controlled" (πολλάκις δὲ καὶ τούτοις μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς σώφροσιν ἐπιδαψιλευόμενοι χαρίζονται) because they know that the latter have certain resources for life in themselves, while the unruly have nothing but the parents.[212] Analogously (τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον), God as Father, while caring for all creation, "provides for those living blameful lives . . . giving them an opportunity for restoration, while also not exceeding his merciful nature."[213]

This posture is particularly visible in two passages about creation. In *Spec.* 4.187, Philo describes how God's creating brought order out of disorder, existence out of nonexistence. The point is that God and "his beneficent powers are always anxious to remodel the trespass of the bad that exists and to convert it to the better." Likewise, at creation God benefitted with "unlimited and rich gifts (εὐεργετεῖν ἀταμιεύτοις καὶ πλουσίαις χάρισι) the nature that without the divine gift (τὴν ἄνευ δωρεᾶς θείας φύσιν) would be unable to obtain any good by itself."[214] The world itself is unworthy, and that which is in the world is unworthy and incapable of good—unless God gives.[215] Consequently, God gives to the unworthy so that they can become worthy. By necessity, then, recipients are unworthy of at least their first gifting. Furthermore, as "every wise man is

211 *Leg.* 1.34. This distinction between perfect and progressing is key for Philo's understanding of worth; see further the next chapter.

212 *Prov.* 2.2–6. Cf. similarly *Opif.* 9–11; also, differently, *Decal.* 81.

213 As Feldman, "Questions about the Great Flood," 405 states: "Philo is convinced, however, that God not only combines mercy with judgment but that His mercy precedes His judgment and that, in fact, he shows His mercy in doing kindness even to those who are unworthy." Cf. further Zeller, *Charis*, 49–59.

214 *Opif.* 23.

215 Cf. *Mut.* 139–42, 154–56.

a ransom for an evil man," so also does God give "his infinite and unlimited riches for the sake of the worthy even to the unworthy."[216] Thus, God gives to the unworthy not only for their wellbeing, but to benefit the worthy.

There are also passages where God gives without consideration of worth or any supervening reasons. The major example of this is God's provision for those of lowest status in society. Philo says that opening fallow fields to the poor—"widows and orphaned children and all others who are neglected and unseen because of their not having enough"—causes them to "abound in surplus" and be "made rich suddenly by the gifts of God" (ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δωρεαῖς ἐξαπιναίως πεπλουτηκότες). These people do not receive God's gifts because of their intrinsic worth, but are "called to participation with the owners in the sacred number seven."[217] Yet, in *Decal*. 40–42 Philo asserts that God the King does not overlook even the lowest persons but considers them worthy (ἠξίωσεν) and provides for them sacred laws. But Philo uses this argument to make a point about how virtuous humans should not overlook those who are disgraced or in terrible situations. God's giving to these lowest is not because of their worth but is an act of unconditioned generosity, for their sake. And to anyone who considers him- or herself deserving of God's gift (ὁ ἀξιόχρεων ἑαυτὸν ὑπολαμβάνων), Philo quotes Deut 9.5: "Not because of your righteousness nor because of the holiness of your heart do you enter the land to inherit it . . ."[218] As Windisch notes, "die Gnadenverheißung, die von menschlichem Verhalten unabhängig gegeben wurde, muß eben erfüllt werden."[219]

Therefore, God gives to the unworthy so they may become virtuous, and God can be generous without worth being an expressed condition, proving that God's generosity is not bound by any explicating system.[220] God gives because he is a God that loves to give; worth may be a *condition* of his giving, but it is not a *cause*, and thus God can give contrary to, or without regard for, worth—in exceptional cases—because it is not the motivating principle of his generosity. But we must keep in mind, first, that these texts are sparse compared to the texts that speak of giving according to worth—God's generosity is

216 *Sacr*. 121–24.

217 *Spec*. 2.108.

218 *Sacr*. 54–57. Consequently, a constitutive element of worth is considering oneself to be unworthy. See LaPorte, *Eucharistia*, 43. Also, Windisch, *Frömmigkeit Philos*, 17: "Der Mensch kann und soll sich nicht würdig machen; gerade das Bekenntnis seiner Unwürdigkeit wird von ihm gefordert."

219 Windisch, *Frömmigkeit Philos*, 19.

220 Kennedy, *Philo's Contribution*, 145. Cf. also Zeller, *Charis*, 42: "Die Freigebigkeit Gottes ist auch der Grund dafür, daß Gott seine Güter auch dem leibverhafteten, zum Bösen geneigten Menschen mitteilt."

often channeled towards the deserving—and second, that these passages play a specific role in Philo's theology. God's giving to the unworthy does more than shake up Philo's neat distinctions in his gift-giving schema. It displays Philo's anxiety about making the Giver-recipient relationship symmetrical, when it is entirely asymmetrical. God always condescends to give, even to the "worthy." Furthermore, it displays that all at some point receive while being unworthy. Although this idea is infrequently stated in Philo's texts, it stands behind every text that speaks of God's giving to the worthy: they are only worthy because God transforms the unworthy into the worthy through his generosity, which then makes his giving fitting. Consequently, this strand of thought has an important role to play in re-conceptualizing the relation of worth and grace in Philo's thought. It is not a simple correspondence between human worth and divine response (reward); rather, divine giving is itself constitutive of human worth, because *God* is the cause of all *good things*. God's act in creation of taking chaos and making order is paralleled by God's giving to the unworthy.[221]

4.2.2 Orderly Giving

Philo customarily speaks of God giving gifts measured to fit the worthy recipient's capacity.[222] We will look at this point here briefly, as the next chapter will elaborate on how and why God gives this way.

Philo asserts that all creation "would not be able to hold the riches of God if he willed to display them." God's giving too little or too much is akin to either drought or flooding, both of which can kill humans.[223] God gives to creatures for "whom a continual enjoyment of similar gifts would harm rather than benefit." God, therefore, carefully weighs his gifts, not giving so that beneficiaries grow insolent, but continually replacing new blessings for old (αἰεὶ νέας ἀντὶ παλαιοτέρων).[224] Accordingly, the creature "never has a share in the gifts of God, since then he would be destroyed by all means;" but by contrast, the creature is "unable to bear" an abundance of such gifts. Thus, because "God desires

221 Thus, Moffatt, *Grace*, 48 rightly observes that the "universal range of divine grace" stems directly from Philo's "view of creation."

222 Geljon, "Divine Infinity," 177 calls this Philo's "principle of measurement." There are two aspects to this: "God's goodness has to be *distributed* and *measured out* to its recipients in a manner commensurate to their capacity for accepting it." Runia, *Timaeus*, 137 (italics original). That is, God gives to particular individuals and gives precise amounts to each.

223 Similar metaphors about rain appear frequently to illustrate this principle. Cf. *Post*. 143–45; *Her*. 31–33; *Ebr*. 32; differently, *Praem*. 100–02.

224 Harrison, *Grace*, 122: "These initial gifts of God are stored up for future benefactions, and are progressively re-introduced to replace existing gifts."

an advantage for us, he measures out the things given to benefit in proportion to the strength of those who receive" (ὁ θεὸς ὠφελεῖν πρὸς τὴν τῶν λαμβανόντων ἰσχὺν τὰ διδόμενα σταθμᾶται).[225]

God does not give according to his own infinite power but according to the capacity of the recipient.[226] Heavenly charity must be measured, for "the things which God is able to give are not possible for a human to receive" (οὐδὲ γὰρ ἃ δοῦναι θεῷ, ταῦτα καὶ ἀνθρώπῳ λαβεῖν δυνατόν).[227] In some ways, then, God's restraint is a merciful gift itself.[228] Since the capacities of humans differ from person to person God gives (χαρίζομαι) by measuring the soul of each person, giving in proportion to each (τὸ ἀνάλογον ἑκάστοις).[229] As van Veldenhuizen states, "God meets people at all levels . . . and apportions his goodness in a way appropriate to the capacities of those who receive it."[230] This idea stresses the finite creatureliness of humans vis-à-vis God's infinite power to give, displaying God to be a perfect and incommensurate giver.[231] Thus, in this way "Philo indicates the great gap between God and man, emphasizing God's transcendence."[232]

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225 *Post*. 143–45. Kennedy, *Philo's Contribution*, 155: "The only limit to the grace of God lies in the narrowness of men's capacity to receive it." Runia, *Timaeus*, 137–38, 441, argues that the Logos, as "premeasurer of all things" (*QG* 1.4), does the work of measuring God's gifts to fit their recipients.

226 But cf. *Her*. 99.

227 *Mut*. 218. Cf. *Somn*. 1.143. Cf. *Ebr*. 32 for a similar argument.

228 Cf. esp. *Opif*. 23. Runia, *Timaeus*, 137 notes that this notion of divine restraint could signal that "the intractability of the chaotic matter" could be what "partially frustrates the divine purpose" in giving but that Philo does not take this route.

229 *Mut*. 232. Cf. *Deus* 80. Commenting on the *Deus* passage, J. Dillon, "The Nature of God in the 'Quod Deus'," in *Two Treatises*, 223 suggests that this aspect of Philo's thought "seems to be a version of the later Neoplatonic doctrine of 'suitability for reception.'" The difference between the two, as Dillon explains the Neoplatonic tradition, is that the Neoplatonists believed the gods to be "constantly benevolent in their bestowal of benefits and wisdom, but creatures can only receive as much as they are constitutionally able to absorb." By contrast, for Philo God measures his gifts concisely. Indeed, Philo implies that humans would die from divine grace if they could "absorb" as much as possible.

230 van Veldhuizen, "Philanthropia," 103.

231 Cf. *Spec*. 1.43–44. On this text (and theme), Harrison, *Grace*, 127 states that "all [God's] benefaction exclusively reside[s] in His sovereign freedom and grace, and not in the initiative of His servants." Windisch, *Frömmigkeit Philos*, 19 has a nice phrase, saying Philo has an insight into "die eigne Unwürdigkeit allem Gotterleben."

232 Geljon, "Divine Infinity," 176. Cf. Zeller, *Charis*, 72: "Jede geschaffene Vollkommenheit schwindet dahin vor der unendlichen Vollkommenheit der Schöpfers."

4.2.3 Summary

"Orderly giving" is not the same thing as "gifts to the worthy." Philo can work in the binary categories of worthy/unworthy, yet he often speaks of a spectrum of worth—from evil to perfect—along which humans may exist at many different points. Those who are perfect, or progressing that way, are the most suitable recipients of God's generosity—of his giving. As Sandmel states, "Grace can most readily come to the man whose virtue puts him into the position of receiving it."[233] Thus, while God's primal act of giving in creation is an overflowing, incongruous gift due to his own goodness, God structures the creation to make possible orderly giving (e.g. natural law) because God is rational and wise. Consequently, Philo speaks primarily of a more discreet beneficence, where suitable gifts are given to suitable beneficiaries. And ultimately, while Philo is worried about making the Giver-recipient relationship appear symmetrical, he is also concerned not to portray God as an arbitrary benefactor. Orderly giving *results* from God's unbounded generosity—human worth never necessitates God's giving, but God "rejoices in giving, whenever the recipients are worthy of the gift."[234] As it stands, these two aspects of God's giving—overflowing and orderly—do not conflict as they have been construed so far.[235] Giving to the worthy is the norm, but there would be none worthy if God had not made them so. The next chapter will further describe how God constitutes worth in humans.

5 Conclusion

God creates and God gives: creation is gift, and giving is viewed from the vantage point of God's creative work. God is generous towards what he has created.

I have arranged this chapter to show how the major aspects of Philo's understanding of God, as epitomized in my three axioms or "grammatical rules," contribute to Philo's view that God primarily and fundamentally is a gift-giver. For Philo, God is the hyper-generous Creator from whom all things come into existence. Therefore, God's giving needs to be understood as an aspect of God's

233 S. Sandmel, "Philo Judaeus: An Introduction to the Man, His Writings, and His Significance," in *ANRW 2.21* (*Hellenistisches Judentum in Römischer Zeit: Philon und Josephus*) (ed. W. Haase; New York: De Gruyter, 1984), 28.

234 *Somn.* 2.177.

235 Even though Windisch, *Frömmigkeit Philos*, 18 can talk about "auch die Unwürdigen" partaking (teilhaben) in God's gifts, I am proposing that this is not a contradiction of Philo's system of divine benefaction but rather an aspect of it.

creative activity—of bringing order to disorder, making better what was bad. Since everything has been created, everything is a gift that has, by grace, moved from worse to better. Related to this, the cause of God's generosity is his goodness, not human worthiness: human worth is often an important condition, but is not the cause, of God's benefactions, for even human worth is a gift. Since everything *is* and *comes from* this creative divine generosity, giving to the worthy is always predicated on a prior giving to the unworthy.

This way of framing God's generosity within the context of his creative work alleviates the seeming discrepancies between God's overflowing giving in creation and to the unworthy and God's orderly giving according to the recipient's capacity and worth. But this chapter, by focusing on God's creative generosity, has necessarily given greater attention to God's overflowing, incommensurate giving. Thus, we must now examine more closely how, for Philo, God has wisely ordered the world to make orderly giving possible.

CHAPTER 2

Cosmological Ethics, Gifted Virtue, and Worth

> . . . philosophy is above all the art of human life; and engagement in it that is not properly anchored to the business of living well is regarded as empty and vain.[1]

1 Introduction: Locating Human Agency and Constructing Worth

The previous chapter leaves us with a theological problem: if all good things must be attributed to God's causation, what then of virtuous human action, those good deeds that constitute one as worthy to receive divine gifts? For Philo, the following statement is not empty piety but the incontrovertible foundation of ethics:

> it is necessary for the soul not to bring to himself the labor in behalf of virtue but to take it away from himself and to offer it up to God (ἀφελεῖν ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτῆς καὶ θεῷ ἀνενεγκεῖν), confessing that not its strength nor its power obtained the good but the One who gives even the love for it (ὁ καὶ τὸν ἔρωτα χαρισάμενος).[2]

What then does "worth" mean when it is necessary *always* for humans to attribute all good things to God? Wolfson argues that "man proves himself worthy of [divine intervention] by trying by his own power of free will with which God has endowed all men to avoid evil and choose good."[3] While God is the "ultimate cause of the free will" that God has gifted to the human race, God is only the "auxiliary cause of certain particular acts of the choice of good where man has proved himself worthy." By contrast, Winston insists that the "'worthy' may simply be those whom God in his infinite wisdom has predetermined to be his chosen ones."[4] Since humans have only a limited free will, worth for receiving

1 M.C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: PUP, 1994), 15.

2 *Leg*. 3.136.

3 Wolfson, *Philo Vol. 1*, 446.

4 Winston, "Freedom and Determinism," 55. There is merit to Winston's argument (cf. *Leg*. 3.77–106). While I am disagreeing with Wolfson's thesis, I am trying to reframe that of Winston's.

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divine gifts cannot be attributed to the actions that humans do not freely do. The disagreement between Wolfson and Winston stems from their readings of the fragment from *Leg*. 4 and how they understand free will in Philo. This text can provide a starting point for the rest of this chapter:

> It is a happy thing for the soul to have the power to choose the better of the two choices put forward by the Creator, but it is happier not for the soul to choose, but for the Creator to bring it over to himself and improve it. For, strictly speaking, the human mind does not choose the good through itself, but in accordance with the thoughtfulness of God, since he bestows the best things upon the worthy. For two main principles are with the Lawgiver, namely, that, on the one hand, God does not govern all things as a man, and that, on the other, he trains and educates us as a man. Accordingly, when he maintains the second principle, namely, that God acts as a man, he introduces that which is in our power as the competence to know something, will, choose and avoid. But when he affirms that first and better principle, namely, that God acts not as a man, he ascribes the powers and causes of all things to God, leaving no work for a created being but showing it to be inactive (ἄπρακτον) and passive (πάσχον). He explains this when he says in other words that "God has known those who are his and those who are holy and he has brought them near to himself." But if selections and rejections are, strictly speaking, made by the one cause, why do you advise me, Lawgiver, to choose life or death, as though I were in control of my choice (ὡς τῆς αἱρέσεως αὐτοκράτορι)? But he would answer: Of such things hear a rather elementary explanation, namely, such things are said to those who have not yet been initiated in the great mysteries about the sovereignty and authority of the Uncreated and the exceeding nothingness of the created.[5]

Moral exhortations to humans are heuristic: through the performance of the exhorted action, the individual learns that it was not himself but God who caused it. Philo stressed human activity because he desired to explain why the Law of Moses commanded humans to live according to God's will and how they could repent when they failed to do so; but that does not mean human agency is relocated or distinct from God's causation.[6] *Deus* 53–54 makes the same point about the "two principles." Only the first principle—that God is

5 J.R. Harris, *Fragments from Philo Judaeus* (Cambridge: CUP, 1886), 8.

6 D.M. Hay, "Philo of Alexandria," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 1, The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism* (ed. D.A. Carson, P.T. O'Brien, and M.A. Seifrid; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 378 states, "Despite this emphasis on grace, Philo does not

not as a man—is "established in the most certain truth" (ἀληθείᾳ βεβαιοτάτῃ πεπίστωται), while the second exists only for instruction. God by nature is not like a "father who will instruct his son" but is rather the almighty Cause.[7] Accordingly, since Philo's theology is centered upon how one may advance in the knowledge of God—indeed, attain the *visio Dei*—it is significant that he declares that once one reaches the summit, he learns that he has no reason for pride: God is the cause of all good things. No work is left for the "passive" and "inactive" human being.[8]

What, then, is human worth? To quote Barclay: ". . .'worthiness' does not have the strong sense of earning or deserving God's grace, but the weaker sense of being a fitting or appropriate recipient of that goodness (see, e.g. *Spec*. 1.43). Philo is concerned to show that God's gifts are neither arbitrary nor squandered."[9] Human worth consists in not considering oneself worthy and in attributing all good things to God; it is about remaining an appropriate recipient rather than struggling to earn God's favor. Thus, human worthiness consists in properly enjoying divine gifts, which must be attributed to God. By contrast, human unworthiness is rejection and misuse of divine gifts, which must be attributed to the human. Ultimately, when the various aspects of Philo's theology are put together, something has to give way; and for Philo, human agency is demoted first, not divine causation. We must be careful to note that Philo does not dissolve human agency; rather, he locates it either inside or outside of divine agency. Any virtuous human action is located within, aligned with, and thus constituted by divine agency; any evil action is outside.[10] Thus, virtuous human agency and worth is comprised of the appropriate enjoyment of divine generosity, of not rejecting or abusing God's benefactions. Any hint of struggling or striving is phenomenological, a façade stripped away upon attaining to the higher mysteries of philosophy.

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hesitate to affirm that there are rewards for the righteous and punishments for the wicked." As we will see, this way of framing the issue—separating grace and reward—is not helpful.

7 Thus, rightly, Zeller, *Charis*, 72: "Mögen auch die moralisierenden Ausführungen Philons quantitativ überwiegen, so haben sie doch nicht das sachliche Gewicht dieser Erkenntnis."

8 Indeed, countering Philo on this point might lead to being named "Cain" (*Sacr*. 2).

9 Barclay, "Grace and Agency," 143–44. Thus, contra Harrison, *Grace*, 125, it is improper to smuggle in the notion of "merit."

10 Thus, Philo's reticence to speak to the problem of evil.

Accordingly, in this chapter I will explore how Philo arrives at this construction of human agency and worth. To do this I will develop the previous chapter's three axioms for how one speaks properly of divine generosity into the larger framework in which Philo considers both divine beneficence and human activity.

First, the God who causes and creates all good things has placed humans in a well-ordered and, therefore, beneficent context: the cosmos, his first and greatest gift.[11] Nature, Law, and Logos order the world so that it reflects God's beneficent nature, while providing both the standards for being virtuous and the specific matrix in which worth is constituted. Second, the God who by nature is hyper-generous is the creator of the virtues, which are the natures given to humans, the impetus for doing good, and what one attains as a result of virtuous living. Human virtue is divine grace, all the way down: it is provoked, enabled, and carried through by God's gifts of human nature, right reason, Law, virtue. Third, God is a perfect and incommensurate giver who consequently gives to the worthy, where worth is constituted not by human striving but as a part of divine generosity itself. The only proper response is faith and thanksgiving to the unstintingly generous Creator.

Thus, divine grace is *cosmological and causative*: God's grace as the cause of the cosmos is also the cause of all good human activity that occurs in his generously ordered world. Further, virtuous living is nothing other than a living in accordance with the Nature of the cosmos: living in line with God's first gift. God orders all things in humanity's favor: divine grace is antecedent to, causative of, and, in the end, constitutive of, all good human life and action.

2 Generously Ordering the World: Nature, Logos, and Law

For Philo, God's wise ordering of all things is macro- and microcosmic: a congruence between cosmos and individual should exist. Nature, Logos, and Law both permeate the world and are received by human beings for their flourishing in virtue. I shall examine each aspect in turn to show how God has created humans within a context ordered for their benefit.

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11 R. Radice, "Philo and Stoic Ethics. Reflections on the Idea of Freedom," in *Philo of Alexandria and Post-Aristotelian Philosophy* (ed. F. Calabi; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 144: "Philo's moral thought is connected with an original creative act, a supreme grace . . . which is that of the cosmos."

2.1 *Nature as Gift-Giver*

Nature (φύσις) is an important concept for Philo.[12] The categories of nature—particularly of the cosmos and of humans—are interrelated.[13] Like the nature of the cosmos, human nature is given by God and is ordered in such a way as to effect a life lived toward virtue, in accordance with cosmic Nature. Nature itself is beneficent, seeking the benefit and harmony of those who inhabit the cosmos.

The world is God's first and greatest gift.[14] Moreover, God gives through creation: the earth is rightly called "Demeter," which combines earth and mother (Δη-μήτρα), for she is the "mother of all things and fruit-bearer and giver of all things" (πανδώρα) who causes the birth and preservation of all living things.[15] Similarly, Philo lauds the poets for naming earth Pandora, for she "gives all things" (πάντα δωρουμένη).[16] Yet, God alone causes good things, without assistance: not the earth in growing produce, nor the rain in nourishing plants.[17] Rather, God shows his munificence through earthly means,[18] in a reciprocal relationship: God gives to the earth to produce and the earth produces to God.[19] But Philo clarifies that God stands behind the appearance of creation's giving: a created thing cannot give like God. Language about creation giving, however, slides into talk of Nature giving, where the relationship between Nature and God is more complicated. As Bockmuehl notes, "rather than distinguishing between 'nature' and 'God', Philo links these two terms closely. Nature often means the nature of God; indeed sometimes the two become virtually

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12 J.W. Martens, *One God, One Law: Philo of Alexandria on the Mosaic and Greco-Roman Law* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 68–77 overviews the main meanings of φύσις in Greek thought, all of which are in Philo. First, φύσις is the "power of growth and life"—a "creative force." Second, φύσις is the "inherent character in things." The nature of a thing is what defines it, its particular abilities and qualities; even God has a particular nature. Third, φύσις is the "order of the cosmos." In creating, God ordered the world intentionally, immutably, and in harmony with all of its parts.

13 Cf. Anderson, *Physical World*, 113: "... a thing has its φύσις by virtue of the creative work of φύσις."

14 Philo uses a variety of terms to describe the world as a gift: χάρις, χάρισμα, δῶρον, δωρεά, εὐεργεσία. Cf. *Ebr*. 117–19, *Deus* 106–08, *Leg*. 3.78, *Mut*. 46, *Somn*. 1.243.

15 *Opif*. 133. Cf. H. Koester, "ΝΟΜΟΣ ΦΥΣΕΩΣ: The Concept of Natural Law in Greek Thought," in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (ed. J. Neusner; Leiden: Brill, 1968), 531: "In Philo, the Aristotelian conception of the *natura creatrix* was combined with the Jewish belief in the Creator God."

16 *Aet*. 63.

17 *Deus* 87–88.

18 *Leg*. 1.34. Cf. *Mut*. 59, 259–260.

19 *Spec*. 2.96–97; cf. 219.

interchangeable."[20] Or as Anderson states, "the two main functions of φύσις as principle—to create and to govern—overlap with what God does."[21] What then is the relationship between God and Nature in gift-giving and how does this speak to God's ordering of the world?[22]

First, Nature's gifts can point to God as the ultimate Giver.[23] For example, Nature chooses humans according to merit and "calls [them] to participation in her own things;" and yet, "for these things it is right for God the host to be both praised and admired" because God has made the earth hospitable.[24] Everything Nature gives has been caused by God; Nature is the table God has set for humanity. Philo sees that Nature has prepared appropriate nourishment for offspring from their mothers, which demonstrates God's providence so that "no one holds back the beneficent and salvific gifts of God" (τὰς εὐεργέτιδας καὶ σωτηρίους τοῦ θεοῦ δωρεάς).[25]

Second, Nature's giving can be parallel with God's giving. Philo says those who desire the "gifts of Nature" (τὰ φύσεως δῶρα) rather than vain opinion will have plenty, which is confirmed by Lev 26.3–4: "If you walk in my statutes and keep my commandments and do them, I will give (δώσω) to you rain in its time, and the earth will give (ἡ γῆ δώσει) its produce . . . "[26] God gives rain to the earth so that Nature can produce its own gifts, and desiring Nature's gifts is linked to obeying God. Philo takes advantage of a hermeneutical opening in Lev 26.3–4, which has both God and the earth giving; the earth is dependent on God but it is still the agent that produces the "gifts of Nature." In the seventh year, the fields lay fallow and the poor are allowed to enjoy the "gift of Nature" (δώρημα φύσεως) that grows spontaneously. The lands are left uncultivated so

20 M. Bockmuehl, "Natural Law in Second Temple Judaism," *VT* 45 (1995): 40.

21 Anderson, *Physical World*, 153.

22 The overall relation between God and Nature cannot be explored here; see the helpful work of Anderson, *Physical World*, 103–54. The traditional interpretation of the relationship held that Philo was essentially a Stoic: Nature is synonymous with God; cf., *inter alia*, Goodenough, *By Light, Light*, 51–52. For an alternative reading, which strongly differentiates the two, see Martens, *One God, One Law*. Anderson cuts a middle path, arguing—rightly, in my opinion—that God and φύσις can neither be entirely identified nor differentiated.

23 Anderson, *Physical World*, 109–12 provides an account of Philo's view of Nature as a "creative power;" this means that Nature's activity must always finally be contextualized within divine creative activity. Nature is not a second cause alongside God.

24 *Spec*. 2.171–73; cf. 198.

25 *Virt*. 133. As Anderson, *Physical World*, 110 states, "Nature is responsible for every stage of human life and nearly every aspect of a person."

26 *Praem*. 100–01. Cf. also *Agr*. 168.

that the produce might be understood as gifts from God (αἱ χάριτες ἐκ θεοῦ) for the needy.[27] From uncultivated lands, produce comes forth as Nature's gift; yet lands are left uncultivated so that produce is understood as God's grace. Similarly, Philo states that God has given "speech to man as a most excellent gift," for just as Nature has given all other creatures their own defenses, so also "has [Nature] given (δέδωκεν) the greatest guard and most impregnable stronghold to humans."[28]

Finally, Philo can speak of Nature's generosity without reference to God. Nature provides humanity with gift after gift (ἡ φύσις τὸν αἰῶνα ἄλλας ἐπ᾽ ἄλλαις ἀμείβει δωρεάς) of whatever the earth can give to aid human life.[29] Therefore, all have the "interminable riches of Nature as supplier."[30] While humans often attribute the fruits of labor to themselves, it is all due to Nature's "giving rich gifts" for human use.[31] All of created reality is a source of gifts from Nature.[32] Nature is a lover of living things;[33] in some cases, it is even appropriate to call Nature "saving" (σωτήριος).[34] Nature provides humans with their bodies and the capacities and senses that go along with them.[35] Thus, Nature gives a multitude of things of which she has no share (δωρέω . . . ὧν ἀμέτοχος): birth, food, growth, age, an organic body, and various sense abilities. These "confessedly good" things must be attributed to Nature.[36] As humans come from Nature and receive all things necessary for life from Nature, Philo can speak of death as "Nature receiving her suitable legal fine" (τὸ οἰκεῖον ὄφλημα).[37] Consequently, the gifts of Nature are something to rejoice about (χαρτόν . . . τὰ φύσεως δῶρα).[38]

Since God is a generous giver, his greatest gift is a gift that keeps on giving. Nature as a personified force orders creation and gives like God.[39] Accordingly,

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27 *Virt*. 97–98.

28 *Somn*. 1.102–15, esp. 103 and 108.

29 *Spec*. 1.172. Cf. also *Spec*. 2.158–59; differently, *Opif*. 133; *Virt*. 129–30; *Opif*. 38.

30 *Virt*. 6.

31 *Virt*. 93–94. Anderson, *Physical World*, 109 notes Philo's emphasis on the "results of *natura creatrix* over those of human effort."

32 Cf. *Mos*. 2.222; *Congr*. 4.

33 *Spec*. 2.205.

34 *Ebr*. 172.

35 *Spec*. 3.111. Cf. *Agr*. 168.

36 *Sacr*. 98–99. Cf. *Virt*. 8; *Spec*. 2.6, 100.

37 *Ios*. 24.

38 *Praem*. 50.

39 Cf. R.A. Horsley, "The Law of Nature in Philo and Cicero," *HTR* 71 (1978): 53: "Even *nature* must be understood in a metaphysical sense as 'Being,' almost in the sense of 'divine existence' (or even 'God')."

Nature and God can be described in similar ways; but Nature is neither God nor a synonym for God. God and Nature act the same way functionally towards humanity, because God's perfect creation reflects the Creator. As Anderson states, "When φύσις operates as the creative and governing principle in the sensible realm, it does so on God's behalf as his agent."[40] It is important that we see here the beneficent nature of Nature, as it were, because God is similarly generous in his creation and ordering of human natures, both of general human nature (humanity) and specific human natures (soul types). Cosmic Nature and human nature are not unrelated. As Martens states, "Everything partakes in a true nature . . . Nature means not simply the natural world, but the nature of all things, namely, nature as the order of the cosmos. Every particular nature shares in the nature of the whole."[41] Thus, when we return to human natures below, we know that the Nature which fashions humanity and in which all particular natures share is an especially beneficent Nature, reflecting its Creator. God orders creation and humanity such that humans may live according to its patterns and so become virtuous.[42]

The created order is controlled by God's agency, through Logos and Law, which are both *of Nature*.[43] Thus, Philo often explicates God's creational ordering with the language of Logos and Law, which also speaks to how the cosmos is structured by gift-giving standards.[44] Accordingly, both Logos and Law are beneficently disposed towards humanity, as we shall now see.

2.2 *The Logos in the Cosmos and the Individual*

The Logos was God's instrument in creating the world;[45] and for Philo, the Logos is thereafter the agent by which God structures and holds together the world.[46] As Philo states, "the Logos of the living One, being the bond of all

40 Anderson, *Physical World*, 153.

41 Martens, *One God, One Law*, 73.

42 Thus, to borrow a phrase from Radice, "Philo and Stoic Ethics," 144, Philo believes in an "ethical cosmos." Cf. G.H. van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 192–95: "assimilation to the cosmos" can be at the same time "assimilation to God."

43 Cf. Frick, *Divine Providence*, 57–88.

44 As Anderson, *Physical World*, 143–46 argues, Logos and φύσις are closely related but cannot be equated.

45 Cf. Termini, "Philo's Thought," 98.

46 See D. Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 1985), 23–25. For a brief, helpful overview of the Logos in Philo, see D.G. Robertson, "Mind and Language in Philo," *JHI* 67 (2006): 424–28.

things (δεσμὸς ὢν τῶν ἁπάντων)... both holds together all the parts (συνέχει τὰ μέρη πάντα) and binds tight by preventing them from breaking up."[47] Numerous statements confirm this to be a fundamental belief for Philo. "The everlasting Logos of the eternal God is the strongest and firmest foundation of the universe."[48] The Logos is the "glue and bond that has filled all things with essence" (πάντα τῆς οὐσίας ἐκπεπληρωκώς)[49]—"essence" here most likely meaning the Logos' own essence, for the Logos "appears in all things."[50] Having brought order from disorder in creation, God's Logos permeates the universe to ensure it does not return to its pre-creation chaos.[51]

The Logos is also the means by which God governs the universe. Thus, God the "helmsman" uses the Logos as a "rudder" to steer all things.[52] Furthermore, the Logos can be called the "ruler and helmsman of the universe," a conceptual-terminological overlap that manifests the intimate God-Logos relationship.[53] God rules "according to justice and Law, by setting before his right reason (ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος), his firstborn son, who is to receive care of this sacred flock" as God's lieutenant. Philo appeals to Exodus 23.20 for support: "Behold, I send my messenger into your presence to guard you on the way." The world, God's "most perfect flock," should respond with Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd, and he shall make me lack nothing."[54] God is shepherd, but God shepherds by sending forth the Logos.[55]

Therefore, the Logos is an intermediary between God and the world. God "gave a special gift to the archangelic and eldest Logos" so that it could stand on the border (μεθόριος) between God and humanity.[56] The Logos is a suppliant for mortals to the imperishable God, and the ambassador of God to his

47 *Fug*. 112.

48 *Plant*. 8–10. As Runia, *Timaeus*, 448 notes, in place of Plato's "cosmic soul" the Logos "is assigned the function of representing the immanent presence of the divine in the cosmos."

49 *Her*. 188. Billings, *Platonism of Philo*, 36 notes the Stoic ring to this idea but argues that Philo's Logos fulfills this function differently because it is not material. Cf. Radice, "Theory of Creation," 137–38; Wolfson, *Philo Vol. 1*, 325–28.

50 *Cher*. 28.

51 Cf. *Somn*. 1.241.

52 *Migr*. 5–6. Cf. *Aet*. 83.

53 *Cher*. 36; *Sacr*. 51.

54 *Agr*. 51–52.

55 Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology*, 50: the Logos is "the face of God turned toward creation."

56 *Her*. 205–206. In *Deus* 57 Philo calls the Logos the minister of God's gifts; cf. Winston and Dillon, *Two Treatises*, 306.

subjects. According to Philo, the Logos rejoices in this gift (ἀγάλλεται ἐπὶ τῇ δωρεᾷ), taking up the words of Deut 5.5: "And I stood between the Lord and you." The Logos is neither created like humans, nor uncreated like God; thus, the Logos is a hostage to both: to God as a pledge (πίστις) that the created world will never choose disorder over order (ἀκοσμίαν ἀντὶ κόσμου), to humanity as a sustainer of the hope that God will not forget his work.[57] Furthermore, the Logos guides God's relations to humanity by dividing and directing God's Powers.[58] The fullest text is *QE* 2.68, in which Philo provides a hierarchy: the Existent One stands above all things, and next is the Logos, "the truly seminal substance of existing things." From the Logos, "as from a spring, there divide and break forth two Powers," the beneficent creative God and the sovereign ruling Lord. The Logos is the origin of the Powers and the agent that divides them.[59] If the two Powers are the Cherubim at the Garden of Eden, the Logos is the flaming sword between and around them. As the Logos was before all things and appears in all things, the Logos originates and encircles all of God's activities towards humanity.[60]

As Winston states, "Philo takes great delight in depicting the polymorphic activities" of the Logos.[61] Philo's Logos functions in three ways that are important for our purposes: 1) structuring the world and preventing it from falling apart; 2) mediating between God and humanity;[62] and 3) defining and dividing God's actions towards the world. The Logos, then, is an ever-present, providential facet of God's ongoing creative activity. Remarkably, all humans are endowed with reason as a divine gift: God gives a "seal, a beautiful gift (πάγκαλον δῶρον) to the soul" to demonstrate that he has given form to formless

57 *Her*. 206. Runia, *Timaeus*, 449 says the Logos is "a kind of divine Factotum, summoned whenever and wherever God comes into contact with the sense-perceptible cosmos."

58 Cf. Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology*, 19: the Powers "may thus be seen as expressions of the one Logos that constitutes the manifestation of God as thinking-acting."

59 The idea of the Logos as the "divider" or "cutter" is important for Philo; see *Her*. 140ff. Hadas-Lebel, *Philo of Alexandria*, 187; D.M. Hay, "Philo's Treatise on the Logos-Cutter," *StPhA* 2 (1973): 9–22.

60 *Cher*. 28.

61 Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology*, 16. Termini, "Philo's Thought," 99 notes the difficulty of categorizing Philo's uses of the Logos. Cf. also Runia, *Timaeus*, 446–47.

62 Indeed, the Logos is God's "interpreter" (ὁ ὑποφήτης αὐτοῦ λόγος; *Mut*. 18). J. Dillon, "Ganymede as the Logos: Traces of a Forgotten Allegorization in Philo?," *CQ* 31 (1981): 184–85 notes *Somn*. 2.249, where Philo calls the Logos God's "wine-steward" who pours "cupfuls of true gladness into the intellect of the righteous man;" the Logos does not differ from the drink being poured.

things.[63] Being sealed by the immutable Logos, humans always retain the quality (ποιός) they received at creation.[64] The human is thus connected to creation through the indwelling Logos that binds all things together.[65] Furthermore, the Logos connects one to God, because it is an "impression, fragment, or radiance" of God's nature.[66] The human soul is a coin "formed by the seal of God, the impression of which is the eternal Logos." God breathed life into man, and it follows necessarily (ὥστε ἀνάγκη) that the recipient must represent the one who gave the breath.[67] And because man was formed after the "image of God," it follows (ἀκόλουθον οὖν) that man was made "according to the archetypal Logos of the Cause."[68] Consequently, Philo believes that human nature is unable to do anything good without the divine gift (ἄνευ δωρεᾶς θείας).[69] Thus, Runia: "when the nature of man is analysed, it emerges that he does possess a divine part, a part through which he is related to God and is able to emulate God in right living to some degree."[70]

Interpreting Deuteronomy 30.15, "Behold, I have set before your face life and death, good and evil; choose life," Philo states that each person is responsible for choosing good because they have "reason in themselves as an incorruptible judge" (λογισμὸν . . . δικαστὴν ἀδωροδόκητον); they should accept the good "right reason suggests."[71] While the Logos is a guide for all humans, it is especially so for good humans who let the Logos guide them and critique their erring ways.[72] Accordingly, right reason stands in the position of a Father to humans, commanding them to pursue truth and obey reason,[73] and thus uphold the Laws

63 *Somn*. 2.45. Cf. D.T. Runia, "God and Man in Philo of Alexandria," *JTS* 39 (1988): 72–73 on the problem of the relation of the "transcendent" Logos with God and the "immanent" Logos in humanity.

64 *Fug*. 12–13.

65 *Opif*. 146. As Horsley, "Law of Nature," 47 states, this "twofold conception of law as the right reason of universal nature and as the mature reason in the human mind is the basic assumption and structure of Philo's thought."

66 Cf. also *Mut*. 223.

67 As Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology*, 28 states, "Philo's confidence in the higher reaches of the human mind rests on the self-assurance of the Platonist in him that the human intellect is intimately related to the divine Logos."

68 *Plant*. 18–20. Cf. *Opif*. 139.

69 *Opif*. 23. Cf. *Praem*. 163. Horsley, "Law of Nature," 55.

70 Runia, "God and Man," 71; cf. Robertson, "Mind and Language," 429.

71 *Deus* 50. Cf. *Leg*. 3.80. Thus, right reason is effectively the human's conscience; cf. Hay, "Philo of Alexandria," 377. See further P. Bosman, *Conscience in Philo and Paul: A Conceptual History of the Synoida Word Group* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 181–90.

72 Cf. e.g. *Cher*. 9, 128.

73 *Ebr*. 33–34.

of Nature.[74] Since the Logos guides and provides standards for human life, it directs humanity to virtue. Right reason is part of the immutable fabric of the universe;[75] living out of step with it is equal to overturning the Laws of Nature that Nature itself has set for humanity's good.[76] Thus, Philo states, "every person who loves the passions abhors right reason as navigator and guide of good things."[77] Wicked men are right reason's adversaries,[78] because love for the passions is antithetical to virtue.[79] Thus, right reason, the "husband" of the soul, can be willfully divorced.[80] When this happens, the human loses his "leader" and is left to his own devices, wandering like a shepherd-less flock, and consequently dies.[81] Adam demonstrates this error by listening to Eve rather than God and thus living contrary to right reason.[82] Consequently, Adam was kicked out of Eden, a "symbolic expression for right and divine reason."[83] By contrast, Moses, who had "excellent reason in himself as a teacher," took as his "sole aim the right reason of nature, which is the only beginning and fountain of virtues" (ὃς μόνος ἐστὶν ἀρετῶν ἀρχή τε καὶ πηγή).[84] Therefore, the Logos, as the *standard* for virtue, *guides* humans to virtue because it is the *source* of virtue.[85]

All humans will live according to right reason—what connects them to God and structures the created order—or rebel against their own reasoning capability. The question, then, is: will they let themselves be guided by the divine gift? As Anderson states, "Because right reason is shared by human beings and the κόσμος, the entire structure of the universe from top to bottom is inherently moral."[86] Hence, the Logos is important for Philo because

74 Cf. *Ebr*. 65–68, 80. Thus, as Horsley, "Law of Nature," 54–55 puts it, right reason is the "means of 'revelation' " of God's Logos and the Law of Nature.

75 *Ebr*. 142.

76 *Decal*. 132; *Migr*. 128.

77 *Sacr*. 51.

78 *Leg*. 3.1.

79 *Leg*. 3.148–50; *Sacr*. 51. These men do not know the "daughters" of right reason, virtues; *Gig*. 17. See further *Leg*. 3.252; *Post* 24; *Somn*. 2.198.

80 *Det*. 149. Cf. D. Zeller, "The Life and Death of the Soul in Philo of Alexandria," *StPhA* 7 (1995): 21: "the entire vehicle of the soul shall come to ruin if the driver—reason—is lacking."

81 *Post*. 68. Cf. also *Spec*. 2.31.

82 *Plant*. 60.

83 *Post*. 32.

84 *Mos*. 1.48; *Plant*. 121; cf. *Gig*. 48; also *Mos*. 1.48. On Noah, see *Gig*. 5.

85 See also *Virt*. 127; *Leg*. 3.168; *Somn*. 1.119; *Conf*. 43; *Plant*. 60, 121; *Deus* 45–50; *Sacr*. 51; *Mos* 1.48; differently *Conf*. 43.

86 Anderson, *Physical World*, 146.

it binds all things together and provides ethical guidance for humanity. The Logos, however, is identified with the Law in its multiple forms.[87] Goodenough states, "The Law is connected with God . . . by Philo's identifying it fully with the Logos."[88] Indeed, God's Laws are everlasting because "right reason, which is Law, is imperishable."[89] Living according to Law is living according to right reason,[90] and abandoning right reason is abandoning Law.[91] Consequently, the Law plays an important role in Philo's understanding of gift-giving, and we must now briefly examine Philo's threefold conception of Law.

2.3 *Philo's Threefold Form of Law*

Philo's threefold form of Law results from his understanding of the sequence of the Pentateuch.[92] Philo states that Genesis fittingly begins with the creation of the world, and it is thus necessary to postpone study of the particular written Laws, which are copies of the "more universal Laws," the models.[93] Philo follows the appropriate order (κατὰ τὰ ἀκόλουθα ἑξῆς) by moving from unwritten to written Law.[94] That is, in the Pentateuch, the creation of the world is first; the lives of the Patriarchs are second; and the giving of the Mosaic Law is third. Philo's self-appointed task is to set forth each form of Law and to demonstrate their interrelation.

87 Cf. Hadas-Lebel, *Philo of Alexandria*, 188–90; D. Winston, "Philo's Ethical Theory," in *ANRW* 2.21, 381.

88 Goodenough, *By Light, Light*, 54. Cf. also M.A. Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law in the Letter of James: The Law of Nature, the Law of Moses, and the Law of Freedom* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 89–90.

89 *Ebr*. 142; *Migr*. 130; *Praem*. 55; *Ios*. 174. Martens, *One God, One Law*, 28. Cf. H. Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 83.

90 *Prob*. 62.

91 *Leg*. 3.148. Cf. *Agr*. 51–52; *Ebr*. 65–68; *Virt*. 127. On the world-city metaphor, cf. *Ios*. 29 and *Opif*. 143.

92 See esp. *Abr*. 1–6; *Mos*. 2.45–48; *Praem*. 1–3 for how Philo orders the Exposition of the Law. Some of the specifics of Philo's discussions of the Law in each text are different, as suits Philo's purpose in each treatise.

93 *Abr*. 1–3.

94 *Decal*. 1.

The most essential form of Law is the Law of Nature.[95] While none would now claim that Philo invented this idea,[96] few would dispute Philo's unprecedented use of the concept. For Philo, Moses proves two principles in the Pentateuch: first, that the creator God is also lawgiver, and therefore, second, that the person who does the Law "lives according to the order of the universe with harmony and union" (κατὰ τὴν τοῦ ὅλου διάταξιν ἁρμονίᾳ καὶ συμφωνίᾳ).[97] The world is like a city with its own constitution, and all of these Laws "aim for the harmony of the universe" insofar as they agree with the "Logos of eternal Nature" (τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀιδίου φύσεως). The Logos of Nature thus dictates what one should and should not do.[98] Adam was the first citizen of the world, and since "every well-ordered (εὔνομος) city has a constitution," the world needed "the right reason of Nature, which is most suitably called . . . a divine Law (νόμος θεῖος)."[99]

In *QE* 2.42, Philo concertinas the cosmic nature of the Law into its instantiation as Israel's Law, only then to expand Israel into a "likeness of the world," such that as the Law relates to God's people it also relates to God's creation.[100] Thus, there is a discernible "order in nature" and a "constitution that the world

95 Anderson, *Physical World*, 136 clarifies that the Law of Nature "makes explicit what is already present in Philo's understanding of φύσις" in terms of the ethical regulations of Nature.

96 Koester, "ΝΟΜΟΣ ΦΥΣΕΩΣ" proposed this idea. Horsley, "Law of Nature" first refuted Koester's argument, claiming that Philo and Cicero were recipients of a Stoic tradition reinterpreted by eclectic Platonists. J. Barton, "Natural Law and Poetic Justice in the Old Testament," *JTS* 30 (1979): 1–14 argues that natural law in its "weaker" and "stronger" senses can be found in the OT itself. Cf. Bockmuehl, "Natural Law," 44: "Philo's development of natural law theory is in fact indebted . . . to a well-documented and long-standing tradition within Second Temple Judaism itself."

97 *Mos*. 2.48–52. Bockmuehl, "Natural Law," 43: "Creation, rightly perceived . . ., manifests the purposes of God." As Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 83 states, "Philo's interest in creation is never merely an exercise in theoretical cosmology, but is always also practical. To understand Moses' account of creation is at the same time to see that God cares for the world and deserves to be obeyed."

98 *Ios*. 29.

99 *Opif*. 142–143. Cf. D.T. Runia, "The Idea and the Reality of the City in the Thought of Philo of Alexandria," *JHI* 61 (2000): 365.

100 Thus, H. Najman, "The Law of Nature and the Authority of Mosaic Law," *StPhA* 11 (1999): 55 claims Philo both "had to authorize his *interpretations* of the Mosaic law" and "to underwrite the *authority* of the Mosaic law." On how Philo "inscribes" Jewish culture in Nature itself, see Niehoff, *Jewish Identity*, 247–66.

uses."[101] Elsewhere, Moses shows that "the world is in accordance with the Law and the Law with the world" (τοῦ κόσμου τῷ νόμῳ καὶ τοῦ νόμου τῷ κόσμῳ συνᾴδοντος). The person who obeys the Law lives with the grain of the universe, "with the intention of Nature, according to which the whole world is regulated."[102] Thus, the world and the Law are in an inextricably close relationship. Everything in creation is governed and regulated by the Laws of Nature, as the Logos pervades and orders everything.

Thus, Philo unites the notions of God as creator and lawgiver by insisting that the God who created the cosmos has put in place his Logos-Law to order all things.[103] But what is the Law of Nature? In essence, the Law of Nature is fully harmonious with the Mosaic Law.[104] Those who are "enrolled in [Moses'] sacred commonwealth" are "busy with the ordinances of Nature."[105] The Law of Nature also binds together Moses' roles as king, lawgiver, prophet, and priest; accordingly, all of Moses' acts are stamped with the "seal of Nature" (σφραγὶς φύσεως).[106] And Moses portrays God creating in six days and resting on the seventh, "according to the ordinances of Nature" (κατὰ φύσεως θεσμούς).[107]

The Laws of Nature manifest and govern the order of creation and establish the way humans should act.[108] The Law "is laid down" so that humans might "pursue what is just in a just manner"—"justice and every virtue with their corresponding actions" (πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν τοῖς συγγενέσιν ἔργοις αὐτῆς).[109] The Ten Commandments direct humanity towards the virtues,[110] and the whole Law anoints people for the height of virtue.[111] Nature has placed hope as the

101 *Abr*. 61.

102 *Opif*. 3.

103 Cf. Wolfson, *Philo Vol. 2*, 189–92; Nikiprowetzky, *Le commentaire*, 117–55.

104 Cf. Koester, "ΝΟΜΟΣ ΦΥΣΕΩΣ," 537–40; Bockmuehl, "Natural Law," 40. The relation between written and unwritten Law in Philo is important, but we cannot examine it here. In my opinion, Najman handles the issue the best: H. Najman, "A Written Copy of the Law of Nature: An Unthinkable Paradox?," *StPhA* 15 (2003): 54–63; Najman, "Law of Nature." On the relation of particular to universal, see Borgen, *Exegete*, 146–48. See also Anderson, *Physical World*, 140 who draws attention to *Spec*. 3.136, which seems to question the harmony between the Laws of Nature and Moses.

105 *Mos*. 2.211. Cf. *Ebr*. 37. Termini, "Philo's Thought," 113: Philo displays the "tendency to project the validity of the Sinaitic Torah backward, to the time of creation."

106 *Mos*. 2.4–14. Cf. differently *Prob*. 30.

107 *Spec*. 2.57–59. Cf. *Opif*. 13–14.

108 Cf. *Mos*. 2.48–52. See also *Spec*. 4.232; *Prov*. 2.23.

109 *Det*. 18. Cf. *Somn*. 2.175–76.

110 *Spec*. 4.133–34.

111 *Spec*. 4.179. Cf. *Spec*. 2.13; 1.305–06.

"gatekeeper" of the virtues; therefore, lawgivers seek to fill human souls with hope.[112] The Mosaic Law is congruent with the Laws of Nature, because the former is the latter's visual representation.[113] Yet the Law of Nature is an esoteric form of Law, unknowable to most humans. Importantly, then, Philo relates the Law of Nature to other forms of Law—most curiously, the Patriarchs.

According to Philo, the Patriarchs lived "blamelessly and well" according to the Law of Nature.[114] They are "embodied and rational Laws" (ἔμψυχοι καὶ λογικοὶ νόμοι), highlighted by Moses for two reasons: first, to show that Moses' commands are not "out of tune" with Nature; and second, to demonstrate that living according to the Law is not impossible, for these men did it without written Laws.[115] Having no one to teach them, these men were "self-taught" (αὐτομαθεῖς), for they "embraced following Nature" and made themselves Laws. Philo notices that in Gen 26.5 God says, "Abraham did all of my Law," before the written Law existed.[116] Where the LXX reads, "Abraham obeyed my voice . . . my decrees . . . my commandments . . . my requirements . . . my laws," Philo subsumes each term under "all of my Law," which is explicated as the "divine Logos" that superintends human activity. Concluding his treatise on Abraham, Philo returns to Gen 26.5, stating, "this man did all of the divine

112 *Abr*. 15–16.

113 Thus, Najman, "Cain and Abel," 118 speaks of "the intimate relationship between cosmic structures and Mosaic laws, which both stem from a single creator and from a perfect paradigm."

114 In *Prob*. 62, Philo lays out the hallmarks of these men as: 1) outdoing their contemporaries in virtue, 2) having God alone as guide, and 3) living according to Law, the right reason of Nature. Cf. the counterexample of Gaius in *Legat*. 119. For the distinctions Philo makes between Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with regard to how each acquires virtue, see below (section 3.3).

115 *Abr*. 4–6. A. Mendelson, *Secular Education in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 1982), 62 notes that Philo places the Patriarchs at "the center of an education system which places a premium on imitation." Cf. E.R. Goodenough, "Philo's Exposition of the Law and His De Vita Mosis," *HTR* 26 (1933): 111–12 puts it, "Moses did not write history . . . for the entertainment of his readers."

116 *Migr*. 130; cf. also *QG* 4.184. On Abraham as "exemplar," see A.Y. Reed, "The Construction and Subversion of Patriarchal Perfection: Abraham and Exemplarity in Philo, Josephus, and the Testament of Abraham," *JSJ* 40 (2009): 186–95. As M. Böhm, "Abraham und die Erzväter bei Philo. Überlegungen zur Exegese und Hermeneutik im frühen Judentum," in *Philo und das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen, I. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus Judeo-Hellenisticum* (ed. R. Deines and K.-W. Niebuhr; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 386 puts it, "Abraham wird von Philo sowohl auf der historisch-konkreten wie auf der universal-allgemeingültigen Interpretationsebene immer in einer dreifachen inhaltlichen Beziehungs-struktur gesehen."

Law and the divine decrees," having been taught not by written documents but by "unwritten Nature."[117] Consequently, Abraham is an "unwritten Law and ordinance." Likewise, as Moses was chosen to be the lawgiver (νομοθέτης), he also providentially became an "embodied and rational Law."[118] Indeed, Moses could compile the written Laws because the Laws were within himself.[119] Since the role of the king is to command what ought to be done, as the Law does, the king is the Law. Thus, Moses is king, and the king an embodied Law, and the Law a just king.[120] Both Abraham and Moses are ἔμψυχοι νόμοι, but Moses is so *par excellence*.

The relation between the Law of Nature and the patriarchs as embodied Laws is not complicated in itself. The Law is not a perishable Law written on anything material, but is rather formed "by immortal Nature in the immortal Mind."[121] Both the Law of Nature and the Logos are, by *nature*, unwritten. Accordingly, the Patriarchs followed only the unwritten Law, before any of the particular Laws were written down, and became themselves "unwritten Law."[122] That is, before the written Law existed, the Patriarchs were virtuous in accordance with the Law.[123] The first volume of the Pentateuch is dedicated to the Patriarchs, and their memories are inscribed not primarily in written records but in immortal nature itself (ἐν ἀθανάτῳ τῇ φύσει).[124] Since the Patriarchs "were zealous for virtue," they hold a special place in Philo's worldview.[125]

2.4 *Conclusion: The Moral Fabric of the Cosmos*

In this first section I have explored Philo's understanding of God's wise ordering of the world through Nature, Logos, and Law. We see where humans are located and begin to see with what God has equipped humans for the

117 *Abr*. 275–76.

118 *Mos*. 1.162.

119 Cf. *Mos*. 2.11ff. D. Winston, "Sage and Super-sage in Philo of Alexandria," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (ed. D.P. Wright; Ann Arbor: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 816: "Philo's man of perfection is in need of no external authority but always acts spontaneously and unbidden out of his own inner resources."

120 *Mos*. 2.4. See esp. R. Barraclough, "Philo's Politics. Roman Rule and Hellenistic Judaism," in *ANRW 2.21*, 487–91. and E.R. Goodenough, "The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship," *Yale Classical Studies* 1 (1928): 55–102.

121 *Prob*. 46.

122 Cf. *Abr*. 5, 16, 276; *Virt*. 194; *Spec*. 4.149–50; *Decal*. 1.

123 See *Abr*. 4–6.

124 *Abr*. 11; 16.

125 *Virt*. 194; cf. *Spec*. 1.324; *Mos*. 2.11. *Cher*. 40; *Abr*. 4–6, 60, and 11.

possibility of living virtuously. What is important for us, as Martens notes, is that the "world, its physical and ethical components, is one."[126] God's first and greatest gift is a moral cosmos, generously ordered. Everything God does in relation to the world aims at harmony between the different aspects of creation.[127] Accordingly, Philo exhorts each person to "repudiate self-love" and instead to seek to please "God, the world, Nature, the Laws, and wise men" (θεῷ, κόσμῳ, φύσει, νόμοις, σοφοῖς ἀνδράσι).[128] Excluding God and the Laws, the other terms could seem out of place; but our investigation has detailed the coherence between each.

This deep cosmological-ethical coherence is significant, because it constitutes the matrix in which humans may become virtuous; and virtue is what establishes a person as worthy to receive divine gifts. Accordingly, Nature, Logos, and Law not only order the cosmos but also the human: virtue is found in the congruence between cosmology and anthropology. Nature is not only the beneficent ordering of the world, but also that which forms individual human natures so that they can partake of virtue; the Logos is not only the instrument by which God orders and governs the world, but also the instrument, the divinely-inspired reasoning power, by which virtuous action occurs;[129] and the Law not only provides ordering to the universe and external guidance for humans, but the Patriarchs as "embodied Laws" exemplify the human natures (or soul types) that make possible virtuous life, and these natures are granted by God. Virtue, then, is living in accordance with the created order, for "virtue is and will be and has been in all things."[130] To live in accordance with one—Nature, Logos, Law, virtue—is to live in accordance with all.[131] Consequently, from cosmos to individual, Philo proclaims a congruent moral and cosmological framework. Having set the cosmological stage, we must now explore the makeup of its human actors, where everything converges on the concept of virtue and its relation to the human soul. And as we might expect, for Philo, virtues are truly nothing other than divine gifts.

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126 Martens, *One God, One Law*, 76.

127 Cf. e.g. *Spec*. 4.187; *Post*. 14; *Cher*. 110–12.

128 *Spec*. 4.131. Thus, cf. Anderson, *Physical World*, 146: "Whether as φύσις or νόμος φύσεως"—and, I might add, λόγος φύσεως—"this cosmic order leads ultimately to virtue and knowledge of God."

129 Zeller, "Life and Death," 21: "Virtue essentially is the exercise of reason."

130 *Migr*. 126.

131 Cf. *Migr*. 128. Cf. Anderson, *Physical World*, 132–33.

3 Virtue and the Constitution of Human Worth

Philo's aretology places a strong emphasis on protology and teleology: God is creator of the virtues and the pinnacle of virtue is the *visio Dei*. Here I will focus on God's role in creating and bestowing virtue upon humans, how virtue relates to human nature, and how humans through growth in virtue—living out their divinely given nature—become worthy of divine beneficence.

3.1 *God as Creator of the Virtues*

"For God caused all virtue [to exist]," (πᾶσαν γὰρ ἀρετὴν παρέσχετο), says Philo.[132] Given Philo's understanding of divine omni-causality, this is unsurprising; but virtue holds a special place among God's creation: "the complete virtues are the suitable progeny of God."[133] Humans should not then assume causation of the virtues nor attribute their labor in virtue to themselves, because God is the source of the virtues *and* the one who gives the love for virtue (ὁ καὶ τὸν ἔρωτα χαρισάμενος).[134] This two-sided relation of God to the virtues is important for construing how divine generosity relates to human worth in Philo's thought. In *Spec*. 2.29, Philo explains the role of God as husband and father of the virtues: the husband sows the seed of the virtues in the soul, while the father brings forth good intentions and excellent actions.[135] Thus, God not only *gives* virtue to humans, but *ensures* that growth in virtue is accomplished: "there are particular gifts that are proper for God to give and humans to receive, and these would be the virtues and the actions in accordance with them" (αὗται δ' ἂν εἶεν ἀρεταὶ καὶ αἱ κατ' αὐτὰς ἐνέργειαι).[136] If virtuous action is life according to Nature/Logos/Law, God is the one who gives the desire for such living and brings it to fruition.

Philo reads Deut 6.11 allegorically as speaking about the virtues given to humans.[137] The cities and houses God provides symbolically signify the

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132 *Leg*. 3.10. Cf. *Migr*. 181–83.

133 *Deus* 4. Cf. *QG* 3.1.

134 *Leg*. 3.136–37.

135 Barclay, "Grace and Agency," 144 states, commenting on *Leg*. 3.137, Philo "does not deny the soul the action, but attributes the love for virtue, and the strength to achieve it, to God." While it is true that Philo "does not deny the soul the action," he would still attribute it to God.

136 *Ebr*. 119. This connection can also be seen in *Cher*. 84, where God's gifts are of a kind that produce virtue as their fruits, as well as in *Cher*. 42–51 and *Leg*. 3.180, which discuss God's impregnating the matriarchs (allegorical virtues) to bring forth further offspring. Cf. C. Lévy, "Philo's Ethics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, 153.

137 *Deus* 93–96.

"generic and specific virtues," and the cisterns prepared beforehand (by God) are the rewards (ἆθλα) given to some because of their labor. They are "treasures prepared for the safekeeping of the virtues." Again, here God provides humans with the virtues as well as what is necessary for growth in those virtues. Furthermore, in Genesis 18.9, when God asks Abraham, "Where is Sarah your wife?" Philo interprets it as God asking, "Where is virtue?"[138] Abraham wisely answers that she is "in the tent, that is, the soul."[139] Abraham has virtue for himself, and for that he is happy; but as Philo states, it is not possession of virtue that brings happiness, but the "use and enjoyment of virtue." For Abraham, God has dropped the seeds of virtue from heaven to impregnate virtue, Sarah, and this results in the birth of Isaac. But here Isaac is not a child; Isaac as εὐδαιμονία is the "use of perfect virtue in a perfect life." Isaac was a generous gift to Abraham.

But how, specifically, does God give virtue to the human soul? How does the human soul then relate to virtue? Philo's idea of God as giver and cultivator of the virtues receives clarity in his allegorical exposition of Genesis 2–3.[140] As Satlow states, "Philo reads the story of Genesis 2–3 not as a drama of disobedience to God, sin, and the loss of immortality . . . but as a story of the formation of human nature."[141]

According to *Leg*. 1.43–73, Gen 2.8–9 describes God's placing Adam (Mind) in Eden (virtue).[142] God set the Mind in virtue because God's most suitable work (οἰκειότατον ἔργον) was forming the human race for virtue, so that the Mind might dedicate itself to cultivating the garden. Philo introduces here the injunction against planting groves of Deut 16.21 to reaffirm that *God* plants and builds the virtues in the soul, and it is therefore not man's job—indeed, the attempt would place humans on par with God. As the Garden is itself virtue, the trees God causes to grow in the garden are "the particular virtues and the actions in accordance with them." The tree of life is the most "generic virtue"

138 Cf. M.L. Satlow, "Philo on Human Perfection," *JTS* 59 (2008): 510 on the wives of the patriarchs as virtues. Cf. further *Ebr*. 59ff. (also *Fug*. 128 and *Her*. 57–62), *Fug*. 154–60, 194; *Leg*. 2.46–50; 3.180, 217–19, 245; *Mut*. 132–50; *Post*. 134; *Sacr*. 20–21; Lévy, "Philo's Ethics," 153–54.

139 *Det*. 59–61.

140 A. Kovelman, "Hellenistic Judaism on the Perfection of the Human Body," *JJS* 61 (2010): 216: " . . . under the surface of Platonic spirituality, there is an astonishing exegetical tradition in Philo."

141 Satlow, "Human Perfection," 502. This is an oversimplification, though, because Philo is concerned with Adam's disobedience; it is simply not the main focus. See below.

142 Cf. esp. Tobin, *Creation of Man*, 134–54. See further Radice, "Philo and Stoic Ethics," 150–51 who notes Philo's uniqueness in placing *man* within virtue, which happens because of "exegetical constraint."

from which all practical virtues are derived. For this reason, it is situated in the center of the Garden, while the location of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is less clear.[143] The four rivers of Genesis 2.10–14 are the four virtues, which come from the main river flowing from Eden, generic virtue, which is goodness.[144] Interestingly, at the beginning of the exposition, Philo explains that God placed humans in the Garden *because of* the evils they encounter. The Garden faces the rising sun because right reason never sets, and virtue, like the sun, illuminates all things and dispels the darkness.[145]

In *Opif*. 153–160, somewhat differently, God plants trees (virtues) in the Garden, which is understood as the "ruling power of the soul" (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡγεμονικόν).[146] The tree of life is the "greatest of the virtues, godliness." The Serpent is "pleasure"[147] that lures the woman (Sense Perception) into wickedness, dragging along also the man (Mind). As a result, God banishes them from the Garden, and thus they miss their chance to have the "consummation of virtue" and an immortal, happy life. Instead, they now live through a "time of demonic evil," being constantly tempted and pulled down by wickedness rather than living purely in relation to virtue. The Serpent "altered the boundaries of the soul" by placing in it the tree of death, thus making the soul a lover of the passions rather than of virtue (ἀντὶ φιλαρέτου φιλοπαθῆ).[148] The soul has three parts: reason in the head; passion in the chest; and desire in the stomach.[149] The soul is in harmony when this order is maintained. But passion and desire can overthrow reason like an unskilled charioteer, if one gives into vice or wickedness.[150] Pleasure "encloses itself around all of the irrational parts

143 As Najman, "Cain and Abel," 117–18 notes, Cain and Abel "exemplify the ways in which the archetypes of virtue and vice"—the two trees—"may come to leave their copies upon the human soul."

144 *Leg*. 1.63–73.

145 *Leg*. 1.45–46. Cf. *Plant*. 27–32; Kovelman, "Hellenistic Judaism," 213–16.

146 As C. Markschies, "Die Platonische Metapher vom 'Inneren Menschen': Eine Brücke zwischen antiker Philosophie und altchristlicher Theologie," *IJCT* 1 (1995): 8 notes, "Philon bezeichnet den von Gott geschaffenen 'vernünftigen' Seelenteil gelegentlich einfach als 'Menschen.' "

147 On Philo's link between pleasure and evil, see A.P. Booth, "The Voice of the Serpent: Philo's Epicureanism," in *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response Within the Greco-Roman World* (ed. W.E. Helleman; Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), 163–64.

148 *Leg*. 3.107. Cf. Termini, "Philo's Thought," 105–06 for a brief discussion of how Philo's understanding of Adam and sin relates to other Jewish readings (e.g. Jubilees, 4 Ezra).

149 Cf. e.g. *Conf*. 21; *Leg*. 1.70–71.

150 *Leg*. 1.72–73.

of the soul"[151] and seeks to upset this critical balance, by steering humans away from the path of virtue. Created naked, Adam and Eve were created without either virtue or vice, which are likened to robes that cover the body.[152] The woman (Sense Perception) was created to be a helper for the man (Mind).[153] The Serpent (Pleasure), however, brings these two together into a mutual relationship, to perceive external sense objects.[154] The "Fall" in the Garden, consequently, has a real, but not irreparable, effect on the human soul.[155] Additionally, Philo argues that "the everlasting fountains of God's gifts have been held back" (αἱ ἀέναοι πηγαὶ τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ χαρίτων ἐπεσχέθησαν) precisely so that the unworthy might not receive them (ἵνα μὴ ὡς ἀναξίοις χορηγῶσιν).[156] There existed originally a more perfect relationship between God and humanity where gifts where given excessively because there was no unworthiness, but such a relationship has been forfeited.

Yet, however it is construed, Philo believes that God plants virtues in the soul as a gift along with their corresponding actions and the motivation to act them out.[157] In his hortatory mode of speech, Philo understands that, given the delicate constitution of the human soul and its tendency to be ordered improperly, living virtuously is complex. As Radice states, "every kind of man,

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151 *Leg*. 2.75.

152 *Leg*. 2.53; on which, cf. Termini, "Philo's Thought," 104; Calabi, *God's Acting*, 128–30.

153 Cf. e.g. *Leg*. 2.24. Unsurprisingly, Philo is often charged with misogyny; cf. e.g. W.A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity," *HR* 13 (1974): 176–77; D. Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 30–35; D. Sly, *Philo's Perception of Women* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 58. For a response, that Philo was "androcentric" but not entirely misogynistic, see D. Winston, "Philo and the Rabbis on Sex and the Body," *Poetics Today* 19 (1998): 41–62. See also the nuanced feminist critique of S.L. Mattila, "Wisdom, Sense Perception, Nature, and Philo's Gender Gradient," *HTR* 89 (1996): 103–29.

154 *Leg*. 2.71–75. Cf. Tobin, *Creation of Man*, 146. On the Mind/Sense Perception-Male/Female relation, see A. van den Hoek, "Endowed with Reason or Glued to the Sense: Philo's Thoughts on Adam and Eve," in *The Creation of Man and Woman. Interpretations of the Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (ed. G.P. Luttikhuizen; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 63–75.

155 Thus, to borrow a phrase from J. Glucker, "Critolaus' Scale and Philo," *CQ* 42 (1992): 144, there is a "frailty of virtue" in human life. Among others, Glucker points to *Sacr*. 122; *Post*. 100; *Migr*. 148; *Mos*. 2.228, 248; *Mut*. 185. See also P. Graffigna, "The Stability of Perfection: The Image of the Scales in Philo of Alexandria," in *Italian Studies on Philo of Alexandria* (ed. F. Calabi; Boston: Brill, 2003), 131–46.

156 *Opif*. 168.

157 Cf. *Plant*. 37. Wolfson, *Philo Vol. 2*, 205–08 explains that this distinction between "the possession (κτῆσις) of virtue and its use (χρῆσις)" is Aristotelian in origin.

through God's grace, is originally in Paradise: but staying there depends on him and the choice he makes."[158] Remaining in the Garden is not a matter of self-achievement but of profitably enjoying God's gifts rather than rejecting them. God's giving the virtues is thus the starting point, but the picture is incomplete without an understanding of how human nature exists between virtue and vice—how humans can overcome the passions to live worthily of God's gifts.

3.2 *Virtue and the Defeat of Vice*

As Zeller states, "Philo rules out the idea of a neutral soul; the decay of virtue means the acquisition of wickedness."[159] For Philo, humans have the appropriate knowledge to choose to live virtuously or wickedly.[160] Humans have received the most excellent gifts of mind and thought, and God has "loosened the bonds of necessity," giving the "most suitable and appropriate possession," which is voluntary will. Man thus acts of his own accord and receives the due recompense:

> For he made him unrestrained and free, able to use his energies voluntarily and intentionally . . . so that, knowing anew both good and evil and . . . those things that proceed from virtue and wickedness, he might choose the better things and avoid their opposites.[161]

The implication, besides the fact that humans choose their actions, is that humans should advance towards virtue; good actions should be natural. Thus, speaking about Noah's contemporaries, Philo claims that God was angry because they were wicked when they ought to have pursued virtue.[162] Even after the expulsion from the Garden, virtue is to be expected, though it is certainly not the norm—a point Philo saw proved daily by his Egyptian neighbors.[163] Yet, as I have already argued, we cannot attribute to Philo an

158 Radice, "Philo and Stoic Ethics," 158.

159 Zeller, "Life and Death," 22. Cf. Mendelson, *Secular Education*, 48–51 for a typology of three types of humans (cf. *Leg*. 1.92–94; *Her*. 45–45). The perfect individual by nature does what is good; those in the middle can choose virtue or vice, acknowledging that there "can be no progress without the active aid of God" (59); and wicked humans are dragged down into evil without hope of escape.

160 *Deus* 45–50.

161 *Deus* 49. Cf. *Praem*. 62.

162 *Abr*. 41 (cf. 37–47).

163 See S. Pearce, "Belonging and Not Belonging: Local Perspectives in Philo of Alexandria," in *Jewish Local Patriotism and Self-Identification in the Graeco-Roman Period* (ed. S. Jones; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Pearce, *Land of the Body*.

"absolute free will" (so Wolfson); rather, the extent of a human's free will is his ability either to reject God's gifts and be dragged into wickedness or to enjoy God's gifts and be swept towards virtue. The latter can be attributed to man; the former must be attributed to God.

The man devoted to pleasure suffers from the evils that plagued the Serpent: difficulty raising the head, being weighed and pulled down by intemperance.[164] He feeds not on heavenly wisdom but on what the earth provides, which leads to drunkenness and gluttony. However, God helps humans overcome the passions and their disastrous consequences.[165] To begin, Philo states that the ability of man to clean out the belly, the home of the desires, is a "sufficient gift from God to the lover of virtue" (ἱκανὴ γὰρ καὶ αὕτη παρὰ θεοῦ τῷ φιλαρέτῳ δωρεά). Furthermore, God descends—without changing place—to lead suppliant souls from the "Hades of the passions to the Olympian ground of virtue."[166] God gives to and helps those who desire to live virtuously, enabling them to do what they could not without his care.

What God provides to humans for their struggle with the passions are, unsurprisingly, Logos, Law, and virtue itself. Thus, Philo can say, if "any of the charms of pleasure call out to you," the soul should turn itself away and look only at the "pure beauty of virtue."[167] The virtues should lure people away from vice by the sheer fact of their existence. And whereas the kingly mind is guided by right reason, the "tyrannical mind" acts according to vice and indulges in the passions.[168] Likewise, the Law supposes that all who adhere to it should be free from every irrational passion.[169]

In Exod 15, Moses praises God for throwing the "horse and his rider into the sea," which means Moses praises God for throwing the four passions and their rider, the miserable mind, into the bottomless pit.[170] God gives victory over the passions. For Philo, this is the point of the song to which all the parts refer,

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164 *Opif*. 157–62.

165 Cf. D.C. Aune, "Mastery of the Passions: Philo, 4 Maccabbes and Earliest Christianity," in *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response Within the Greco-Roman World* (ed. W.E. Helleman; Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), 125–58. Philo believed in the possibility of human repentance for evil (cf. e.g. *Virt*. 175–85). Thus, Moses being a "lover of virtue" and "humanity" sets forth "great rewards for those who repent" (ἆθλα προτιθεὶς. . .μεγάλα τοῖς μετανοοῦσι; *Virt*. 175).

166 *Post*. 30–31; cf. *Somn*. 1.173.

167 *Gig*. 44.

168 *Leg*. 3.80

169 *Spec*. 4.55.

170 *Leg*. 2.102. Cf. *Migr*. 62–63. Zeller, *Charis*, 75: "Philon gibt der Exodustat eine allgemeinmenschliche Bedeutung."

because "if freedom from the passions occupies the soul, it will be perfectly happy."[171] Humans are responsible for their actions, whether virtuous or otherwise, and thus receive rewards or judgment; but the praise for living virtuously must be given to God, because God has given the means and empowerment for such living, and indeed, caused it.[172]

In the quest for virtuous living, the Patriarchs are exemplars. Moses is the inimitable, perfect example, while Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are allegories for the virtuous natures that God gives to humanity.[173]

3.3 *Moses, the Patriarchs, and the Road to Perfection*

Moses was the "greatest and most perfect" and the "most pious" human to live.[174] Although Abraham is wonderful, his journey towards perfection *ends* where Moses' *begins*: "this highest wisdom [of Abraham] is the first training of Moses."[175] This division between perfection and those advancing towards perfection is a key tenet.[176]

In *Leg*. 3.140–147, Philo directs his reader to observe the difference between the perfect man (τέλειος) and the man who is progressing (προκόπτων) towards perfection.[177] The perfect man, Moses, is able to "cut off the whole passion of the quarrelsome soul" and to make it submissive and peaceable. Thus, Moses has been "thoroughly cleansed and has shaken off the pleasures;" his soul is offered to God without blemish. As Philo points out, Moses did not cut out the body part capable of passion, the belly; rather, Moses purifies the belly and is so contemptuous of passion that it is not an issue. This purification itself is a

171 Cf. also *Her*. 70.

172 Cf. A. Mendelson, "Philo's Dialectic of Reward and Punishment," *StPhA* 9 (1997): 105: "A person achieves virtue only by the grace of God." Mendelson is speaking specifically about *Virt*., but the statement is applicable here as well. Mendelson argues that in *Virt*. and *Praem*. Philo has a deuteronomistic concept of justice, a *quid pro quo* where God rewards the virtuous and punishes the wicked. By contrast, particularly in the "Cain Trilogy," Philo questions rather than simply affirms the deuteronomistic concept. Instead of postulating a development in Philo's thought, Mendelson views these two positions as a "dialectic," where "either one element or the other dominates, depending on contingencies" relevant to the context (125).

173 Cf. Zeller, *Charis*, 59: "Dabei werden heilsgeschichtliche Themen allegorisch auf die Ebene des Einzelnen transponiert."

174 *Mos*. 1.1; 2.9–11, 192; *Det*. 132; *Praem*. 52–56.

175 *Post*. 174.

176 Cf. Anderson, *Physical World*, 164: "Most people reside in this land of progress, and Philo directs his attention to helping them improve."

177 *Leg*. 3.140.

gift from God to the lover of virtue. Furthermore, Moses washes his feet, that which supports pleasure. Accordingly, in Leviticus 19 Moses commands those who are progressing to "wash the bowels and feet," yet not the belly, because the one who is progressing is incapable of outright denial of the passions. The virtuous man moves towards virtue and its appropriate actions of his own inclination (τὸν τέλειον ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ κινεῖσθαι πρὸς τὰς κατ᾽ ἀρετὴν ἐνεργείας), whereas the one who is progressing is under the guidance and command of reason. The former has overcome the passions; the latter is struggling to do so.

Thus, the difference consists in how each relates to their passions; and this has implications for how God relates to the individual.[178] God is Lord and Master (κύριος καὶ δεσπότης) of evil humans,[179] seeking to strike terror in them about their way of life. To those who are progressing, God is God, the beneficent power, who helps them progress towards perfection by receiving benefactions (ὑπὸ θεοῦ εὐεργετεῖσθαι ὅπως ταῖς εὐποιίαις τελειότητος ἐφίκηται). For the perfect person God is both Lord and God, because such a person is worthy to relate to God as he fully is toward humanity.[180] Furthermore, perfect people receive perfect gifts from God, while those who are progressing receive less perfect, or temporary, gifts.[181] Accordingly, Moses is God[182] to Pharaoh because the perfect man is neither God nor man.[183] Attaining a likeness to God is the proper goal of humanity.[184] Thus, if perfection is found in no created thing

178 For this idea, see esp. *Mut*. 19–24.

179 E.g. Pharaoh.

180 Thus, Termini, "Philo's Thought," 101 states, "the powers foster progress in one's knowledge of God, beginning from fear and moving toward friendly commerce, offered by God Himself as a gift."

181 *Leg*. 3.196.

182 Cf. *Sacr*. 8–9; *Det*. 161; *QE* 2.29. On the issue of calling Moses "God," Runia, "God and Man," 73 notes that Philo can approach the question in two ways. Theologically, since no name is "indicative of [God's] essence," to call Moses "God" is not a claim about divinization but a relational claim. Philosophically, because the Logos indwells humans, it is difficult for Philo "to give a clear indication of where God's true divinity ends and man's derived divinity starts." See also V. Nikiprowetzky, "'Moyses Palpans Vel Liniens': On Some Explanations of the Name of Moses in Philo of Alexandria," in *Nourished with Peace: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of Samuel Sandmel* (ed. F.E. Greenspahn; Chico: Scholars Press, 1984), 126–28; R. Bauckham, "Moses as 'God' in Philo of Alexandria: A Precedent for Christology?," in *The Spirit and Christ in the New Testament and Christian Theology: Essays in Honor of Max Turner* (eds. I.H. Marshall, V. Rabers, and C. Bennema; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 246–65.

183 *Somn*. 2.234.

184 *Opif*. 144.

but appears at times because of God's grace,[185] Moses is a unique recipient of God's gifts, existing in a sublime reciprocal state of being perfect through God's gifting and receiving gifts from God for being perfect.[186] However, such a status is unattainable for the rest of humanity, for whom Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the models for how one progresses towards perfection.[187]

> Therefore, properly, has [Moses] joined together the kinship of these three, who are nominally men, but are in truth . . . virtues: nature, instruction, and practice, which men call by another name, the three Graces, either from God's giving to our race the three powers that lead towards perfection of life or because they have given themselves to the rational soul, a perfect and most beautiful gift . . .[188]

God is the "God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob." But God has not attached himself to mere men but to these virtues, which are the natures, or soul-types, that God gifts to humans for the pursuit of virtue.

Each Patriarch is different, yet each is pressing towards the same end—perfection.[189] None is named for having one of the natures/powers alone; rather, each receives his name from the power that "increases according to mastery."[190] As Philo argues, instruction cannot be perfected without nature or practice, nor nature without instruction and practice, and so forth.[191] There is an essential congruence (οἰκειότης) between the three. But Philo still distinguishes and prioritizes between the types. For example, Philo groups Abraham and Jacob as more practical types, and Isaac (and by extension Moses) as theoretical. As instruction, Abraham has to *learn* many things, some of which are "genuine according to understanding" while others are "illegitimate principles

185 *Plant*. 93. Cf. *Mos*. 2.288.

186 H. Najman, *Past Renewals: Interpretative Authority, Renewed Revelation, and the Quest for Perfection in Jewish Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 226–28 argues that it is possible for all humans, like Moses, "to be liberated through death."

187 Cf. Satlow, "Human Perfection," 508. On the Patriarchs in Philo, see esp. M. Böhm, *Rezeption und Funktion der Vätererzählungen bei Philo von Alexandria: Zum Zusammenhang von Kontext, Hermeneutik und Exegese im frühen Judentum* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005).

188 *Abr*. 54.

189 *Abr*. 49. See G.E. Sterling, "Philo's De Abrahamo: Introduction, Life of Abraham," *SPhA* 20 (2008): 129–31.

190 Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 152: "If any of these conditions be lacking, perfect virtue will not be achieved."

191 Cf. Böhm, "Abraham und die Erzväter," 386: Abraham "steht . . . immer in einem Verhältnis zu Isaak und Jakob . . . "

according to encyclical instruction." Abraham's learning takes him from astronomical speculation to the knowledge of God, for which he is dependent on God's revelation of himself.[192] Thus, it is not that Abraham "sees God" but that "God appeared to the wise man." Abraham *learns* virtue. Jacob, who is made perfect by *practice*, relies on exercises consisting in doctrines of different qualities. Although the Jacob-soul toils, he receives the "portion of Isaac" and thus "by necessity puts away labor" because of the "excesses of things prepared" and the "good things" which are the "causes of non-exertion." Naturally, the "fountain from which these good things rain is the presence of the bountiful God," who promises, "I will be with you."[193] Accordingly, when Jacob declares, "God has taken mercy on me, and all things are mine" (Gen 33.11), this is an instructive doctrine because in this utterance he "anchors all things in the mercy of God."[194] Jacob acquires virtue by *practice*. Finally, Isaac, a member of the self-taught race (τὸ αὐτομαθὲς γένος), is not in need of practice or instruction, for he does not need the "concubine sciences" or illegitimate doctrines.[195] Isaac has received a pure and unmixed nature from God, from *birth*, as God showered upon Isaac the virtues of being self-taught (αὐτοδίδακτον).[196] Philo can even interpret Isaac's birth to mean that "God is the father of perfect nature."[197] Isaac thus attains virtue without labor.[198] To be αὐτομαθής is to be taught by God, enjoying the virtuous soul with which God has benefitted the individual.[199]

As Satlow notes, "Philo identifies philosophy and practice as the two paths to human perfection. Philosophy seems to be the superior path, as it involves an ontological change in the way that the soul deals with the passions. Practice is less certain."[200] There is certainly subordination within the unity of the three patriarchs, but the point is this: one takes the way of Abraham, Isaac, or

192 Cf. *Abr*. 79–80. As the one who achieves virtue through instruction, Abraham is the model for all proselytes; see Zeller, *Charis*, 86–87.

193 *Migr*. 30.

194 *Sacr*. 42.

195 Thus, Isaac is the only patriarch to have one wife and no concubines. P. Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo* (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 119 notes that the one who is self-taught by Nature refers to "the one who is the object of divine grace."

196 See Anderson, *Physical World*, 116–18.

197 *Leg*. 3.219.

198 *Congr*. 34–38.

199 As Billings, *Platonism of Philo*, 82 puts it, Isaac is a "spontaneously virtuous man." Cf. Hadas-Lebel, *Philo of Alexandria*, 136.

200 Satlow, "Human Perfection," 515.

Jacob—or rather, a mix of all three—to become Moses-like.[201] One receives their particular human nature from God and should seek to allow God to work through it to bring the individual to perfection. As Anderson states, "φύσις as intrinsic character is . . . very positive" in this regard for Philo, as "it effortlessly leads a person to perfection, because God works through it."[202] Thus, Philo plunders the stories of the Patriarchs for clues about how humans live to please God.[203] As Philo reads it, "there were men long ago who surpassed their contemporaries in virtue, who took God alone as guide and lived according to the Law, the right reason of nature" and were not only free themselves, but also instilled freedom in others.[204] God gives these virtuous human natures to individuals, and "God alone, the most perfect nature, is able to bring one to the heights of perfection."[205] It should not be surprising that Philo can identify the Patriarchs not only with virtues given to humans as human natures, but also as the Graces. Thus, the "friend of virtue"—the one who is properly disposed to receive—should pray for all good things to be implanted in him: learning, progress, perfection (εὐμάθεια, προκοπή, τελειότης).[206] Accordingly, Barclay states, "Philo's theology of grace thus extends across the whole human journey, from creation to perfection."[207] The virtuous man is made to participate in the utter tranquility and firmness of God's perfect nature—and this only by God's power.[208]

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201 Cf. also *Abr*. 25–26. Abraham's story in Genesis is fertile ground for Philo, because he can allegorize Abraham's migration as his relationship with God. Cf. O. McFarland, "Whose Abraham, Which Promise? Genesis 15.6 in Philo's De Virtutibus and Romans 4," *JSNT* 35 (2012): 109–14.

202 Anderson, *Physical World*, 118. Cf. esp. *Fug*. 168–72.

203 Cf. A. Kamesar, "Biblical Interpretation in Philo," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, 85–86.

204 *Prob*. 62.

205 *Fug*. 172. Anderson, *Physical World*, 118 rightly notes that "conceptually φύσις and God are equivalent means for attaining virtue, but Philo is reticent to make that link explicit."

206 *Agr*. 168; *Fug*. 137–39. As Zeller, *Charis*, 83 states: "... Tugend immer schon durch das göttliche Element im Menschen ermöglicht ist." Cf. *Mut*. 258–60.

207 Barclay, "Grace and Agency," 147. Further: "It would be hard to find stronger expressions of the *priority* of divine grace: any hint that human activity was a prior cause of virtue or spiritual vision would suggest to Philo the grossest impiety."

208 *Post*. 28. Philo is interpreting Deut 5.31: "And you yourself, stand with me." Anderson, *Physical World*, 118 states that "God imparts virtue, even if phenomenologically it appears to come entirely naturally from within a person."

3.4 *Conclusion: The Gift of Virtue*

For Philo, humans are gifted with all of the resources necessary for being virtuous, where being virtuous is having a properly ordered soul by controlling or defeating the passions. An ordered soul in an ordered universe—all in line with God's creative purposes. As Zeller states, it is clear "daß bei Philon Ontologie und Soteriologie ineinander übergehen."[209] What is important for our purposes is that being virtuous is what constitutes a person as worthy to receive gifts from God: living in accordance with God's gifts enables one to receive other gifts. And as should be clear, being virtuous is nothing other than a gift from God, for God causes all good things. The one who seeks perfection through learning achieves it only through God's revelation of himself; the one who practices is made to rest in God's tranquility; and the one blessed with the nature of being self-taught is spontaneously virtuous. Consequently, the soul cannot attribute virtue to itself but must attribute the "labor in behalf of virtue" to God;[210] for God alone leads the soul out of Egypt, "quickly taking pity" on the tempted soul, which he causes to love labor in virtue while also making the "rough and steep way" level and easy;[211] thus, those who desire virtue "disregard their strength," trusting God to raise the fruits of virtue like produce from a field.[212] Such examples could be multiplied *ad nauseam*: Philo believes that God, in every respect, causes virtue; humans must only not reject God's gifts.

4 God's Generosity to the Worthy

We now return to where this chapter began: the concept of worth. While in one respect virtue and worth are two sides of the same coin, it is more correct to say that Philo's virtue-spectrum unpacks the category of worth. That is, the binary categories of unworthy and worthy translate into the categories of evil, those who are progressing—from those with only a scrap of virtue yet with desire to grow, all the way through to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and perfect. Worth, then, encompasses this wide spectrum of progressing to perfect. Consequently, being worthy of divine gifts is not the result of struggling to please God but rather of not rejecting God's gifts and of attributing all growth in virtue to God. This last section will fill out the picture and confirm what has

209 Zeller, *Charis*, 72.

210 *Leg*. 3.136.

211 *Post*. 154–57.

212 *Det*. 114.

come before, demonstrating the various ways Philo talks about God's giving to the virtuous and the worthy. But, crucially, what I have argued so far should put these texts in a different light: an understanding that virtue and worth is not something accomplished by humans, but is a gift from God. One is worthy because God gives virtue, impels virtuous living, and sees such living achieved in those who desire it. Since all growth in virtue must be attributed to God, only rejection of God's gifts can be attributed to the human.

We will first explore the way Philo speaks of God's generosity to the virtuous, and then God's giving to the worthy. The worthy are virtuous, but God's giving to the virtuous is what makes them worthy.

4.1 *Gifts to the Virtuous and the Constitution of Worth*

Since God gives people what they need to live virtuously, God has different gift-giving relations with different people, both rewarding them based on their use of those gifts and giving further to aid their progress. Thus, when Philo distinguishes between "gifts" and "offerings" in his interpretation of Numbers 28.2, gifts are the perfect good things God gives to the perfect while offerings are lesser gifts given to those who are advancing in virtue.[213] As stated above, God relates to those progressing only as *God* the gracious power, so that through God's benefactions the person might become perfect; by contrast, the perfect person is ruled by the Lord and benefited by God, and as such he is unchangeable, wholly a man of God.[214] All who are progressing—who have set their face towards virtue, not rejecting God's gifts—are supplicants; and God gives unstintingly to all supplicants, and even if there is only a glimmer of virtue (τὸ βραχύτατον ἀρετῆς) God will still give for the purpose of making the recipient resemble himself. Philo employs an analogy of fire: if the smallest spark is ignited, a fire can grow and give light to all around it. In the same way, the person with only a hint of virtue receives from God in order to improve and give light through a virtuous life to all those around. God gives so people may become perfect, and living perfectly is living in accordance with nature (τὸ ἀκολούθως τῇ φύσει ζῆν), achieved by walking the path of virtue (εἰς τὴν ἀρετῆς ἀτραπὸν ἐλθών), in the footsteps of right reason (κατ' ἴχνος ὀρθοῦ λόγου), and keeping God's commandments.[215] God gives to the just person because he prays to receive from God whatever he lacks, not because he already has what he needs. Thus, God's gifts to the virtuous show the individual's dependence

213 *Leg*. 3.196.

214 Mut. 24; cf. 18–19. However, the godless person stands under judgment and does not receive any assistance in his endeavors, *in order that* he might fail; cf. *Det*. 114.

215 *Mut*. 120–28.

on God. Consequently, one does not have to be perfect to be worthy of divine gifting. The only condition is that one longs for virtue; and yet, that longing is also given by God.

Interpreting Exodus 16.4, God's declaration that he will rain down bread on Israel from heaven, Philo states that this bread is actually heavenly wisdom, which is not rained down on everyone but upon "those souls that have a longing for virtue."[216] This is indicative of Philo's understanding that God "gives a bountiful multitude of good things" (πλῆθος ἄφθονον ἀγαθῶν δεδώρηται) to the person who has an excellent soul.[217] As Philo states, the "fountains of God's graces are everlasting, but are not given to all men, but rather to supplicants alone" (μόνοις ἱκέταις).[218] Unsurprisingly, supplicants are those "who love nobility of character" (οἱ καλοκἀγαθίας ἐρῶντες).[219] Beyond gifting the virtuous person's intellect with wisdom, God also rewards the virtuous with freedom from all diseases, because as the body is the house of the soul, "God has thought it right to give the virtuous a reward" of a well-built house.[220] The virtuous person must then give thanks for the gifts God has given, because "the gifts are given to the virtuous" (σπουδαίῳ γὰρ ἐδόθησαν αἱ χάριτες) and the person who wants to receive in the future must be worthy of the gifting.[221]

The pinnacle of the gifts given to the virtuous is the *visio Dei*, which constitutes the individual as Israel.[222] Israel is God's chosen people; but for Philo, Israel is not simply Israel but those "who see God."[223] According to Gen 32,

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216 *Mut*. 259–60.

217 *Leg*. 3.203.

218 On this theme, and the role of prayer in Philo, see C.W. Larson, "Prayer of Petition in Philo," *JBL* 65 (1946): 185–203.

219 On supplicants, see esp. Zeller, *Charis*, 60–61: "Der ἱκέτης ist der Mensch bzw. die Seele oder die Vernunft, die zu Gott ihre Zuflucht nimmt." Zeller draws attention specifically to *Mos*. 1.72.

220 *Praem*. 119–20.

221 *Spec*. 1.283–84. Cf. also *Det*. 114.

222 On the question of Philo's mysticism, see, *inter alia*, D. Winston, "Philo's Mysticism," *StPhA* 8 (1996): 74–82; D. Winston, "Was Philo a Mystic?," in *Studies in Jewish Mysticism* (eds. J. Dan and F. Talmage; Cambridge, MA, 1982); the classic study is Goodenough, *By Light, Light*. For a more recent treatment, see C. Noack, *Gottesbewußtsein: Exegetische Studien zur Soteriologie und Mystik bei Philo von Alexandria* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

223 Cf. e.g. *Conf*. 56; *Congr*. 51; *Abr*. 57; *Legat*. 4; *QE* 2.51. Much scholarly attention has been devoted to the question of Israel and Jewish identity in Philo. Philo's allegory to some extent—but not completely (see below)—removes the "Jewishness" of Israel such that any person can be Israel. On the issue, see esp. E. Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996); more broadly, Niehoff, *Jewish Identity*; Barclay, *Mediterranean Diaspora*, 170–80. On Philo's terminology for Israel

Jacob wrestles with God and is given the new name Israel; he then names the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God" (εἶδον γὰρ θεόν).[224] Jacob thus allegorically represents the person who exercises their soul and lives prudently, with the reward of seeing the true God who manifests himself to the worthy.[225] Being Israel is thus not solely a Jewish distinctive but a distinctive of the virtuous soul.[226] This is because Israel is constituted by those who voluntarily acquired virtue and are thus considered worthy of rewards and gifts (μισθῶν καὶ δωρεῶν ἀξιωθέντας).[227] Israel is the "first-fruits" of the human race to God, who has mercy and compassion on them.[228] Thus, the *visio Dei* is contingent on the cultivation of a pure soul, development in virtue.[229] But "seeing God is

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and the Jewish people, see L.R. Ubigli, "The Image of Israel in the Writings of Philo of Alexandria," in *Italian Studies on Philo of Alexandria* (ed. F. Calabi; Boston: Brill, 2003), 53–59.

224 On Philo's interpretations of Gen 32, see C.T.R. Hayward, "Philo, the Septuagint of Genesis 32:24–32 and the Name 'Israel': Fighting the Passions, Inspiration and the Vision of God," *JJS* 51 (2000): 209–26.

225 On Jacob, cf. *Migr*. 201; *Somn*. 1.171; *Praem*. 44; *Mut*. 81; *Post*. 63; *Fug*. 208; *Her*. 78; *Abr*. 52–54. For a discussion of what the virtuous person is actually seeing, cf. S.D. Mackie, "Seeing God in Philo of Alexandria: The Logos, the Powers, or the Existent One?," *StPhA* 21 (2009): 25–47.

226 *Somn*. 2.173. But, rightly, G. Delling, "The 'One Who Sees God' in Philo," in *Nourished with Peace: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of Samuel Sandmel* (ed. F.E. Greenspahn; Chico: Scholars Press, 1984), 35: "The gift of seeing God is bound up with the particular relationship to God that God accords the Jews, accords them as the company which worships him, the one God." Or, as Mendelson, *Philo's Jewish Identity*, 131 notes, "Philo regarded the spiritual supremacy of his nation as a fact of life." Thus, while his understanding of "Israel" does have a de-particularizing tendency, we should assume that it is not simply a de-Judaizing tendency.

227 *Ebr*. 94.

228 *Spec*. 4.179–80. See esp. *Decal*. 81. Cf. on the benefaction relationship to Israel: *Leg*. 2.56; *Sacr*. 127; *Virt*. 41; *Mos*. 2.41, among others.

229 S.D. Mackie, "Seeing God in Philo of Alexandria: Means, Methods, and Mysticism," *JSJ* 43 (2012): 152–58 rightly emphasizes the presence of human agency in becoming virtuous. But he employs a simplistic monergism/synergism distinction such that the presence of human agency can imply synergism or human action alone. Consequently, Mackie gives insufficient weight to: 1) Philo's commitment to divine omni-causality; 2) Philo's belief that humans, if they do anything good, do it by the power of divine gifting in them; and 3) Philo's insistence that good actions can never be attributed to oneself but to God. Virtuous human activity is never achieved by the human alone, nor is it synergistic; it is the proper outworking of receiving God's gifts, of not rejecting them. That is, Mackie is unable to contextualize human agency. However, Mackie is helpful when discussing the "means" of the *visio Dei*.

entirely God's gift," as should be clear by now, because God is the one who gives Israel eyes to see and is the cause of all good things.[230] As Philo states, it would be impossible for any person, by himself, to comprehend the "truly living One" unless he "disclose and display himself."[231] What is necessary from humans is desire and openness to receive from God.[232]

God's relation to Israel is thus explicated in terms of a gift to the worthy. God has "given a special gift to the race that is able to see" (χάριν ἔδωκας ἐξαίρετον τῷ διορατικῷ γένει);[233] to the "pure and sure-sighted race" the "Father of the universe gives the greatest of all gifts" (ὁ τῶν ὅλων πατὴρ . . . μεγίστην πασῶν χαρίζεται δωρεάν).[234] That is, "Israel" expresses the truism that God benefits the worthy.[235] Persons who reject virtue—and thus live out of step with the cosmos—God looks upon as enemies, while those who live virtuously receive good things from God. For Philo, it only makes sense that the locus of such virtuous living and gift-giving would be Israel.

4.2 *God's Gifts to the Worthy*

"God rejoices in giving," Philo claims, "whenever they who receive are worthy of the gift" (διδοὺς γάρ, ὅταν ἄξιοι χάριτος ὦσιν οἱ λαμβάνοντες).[236] The bountiful God rewards (γεραίρω) people who do the Law, because of the likeness of "good things" to God's own self.[237] Yet, being worthy is not being perfect; rather, they are worthy of his gifts who lie anywhere on the spectrum from progressing to

230 Delling, "'One Who Sees God'," 34. Also, Barclay, "Grace and Agency," 146: "at every stage, and in every dimension of this soul-journey, the soul is dependent on the grace of God in revealing himself; and . . . the highest or climactic reaches of this ascent always end in the 'rest' or inactivity of the soul, where the soul comes to its limits and experiences the pure agency of God."

231 *Abr*. 80. See also *Praem*. 84.

232 Cf. Zeller, *Charis*, 75–79 on "die himmlische Eros" God implants in humans, which makes them desire virtue. *Mos*. 2.67.

233 *Her*. 36.

234 *Migr*. 46.

235 One implication of Philo's de-historicized and universalized interpretation of Israel is that the concept of covenant takes on new meanings—it is de-historicized as well. If Israel is no longer strictly an historical collective, it does not make sense that God would make agreements and promises to such a group in history. Philo transforms the covenants into God's generosity to worthy humans, as, for example, the Patriarchs were allegorical representations of types of virtuous humans. Cf. Philo's exposition of Genesis 17 in *Mut*. 47–60; for the covenant with Isaac, *Mut*. 252–63; also *Leg*. 3.85. For Noah, *Somn*. 2.219–25, 237.

236 *Somn*. 2.175–77.

237 *Praem*. 126.

perfect. In the immediate context Philo is interpreting Deut. 30.9, that God will return to and rejoice in those who obey his Law. Philo asks, what could instill a greater desire for virtue? God's gifts provoke one to progress in virtue instead of solely being the reward for perfection. The other side of Philo's pronouncement is not that God gives unhappily to the unworthy. For Philo, giving to the unworthy specifically entails giving to those who are incapable of receiving because they misuse what they have already received. While I have argued that God can give to the unworthy, since, from a certain perspective, all are unworthy, it is more typical for Philo to say God does not give to the unworthy in the sense of those who are willfully disobedient, who misuse God's gifts, who face the opposite direction from virtue.

Those who are worthy are obedient to God. Interpreting Psalm 23.1, Philo argues that the meaning of "The Lord is my shepherd, and he will cause me to lack nothing," is that God takes care of his obedient flock.[238] As Philo states elsewhere, "God gives nothing imperfect to those who are obedient" (χαρίζεται δὲ ὁ θεὸς τοῖς ὑπηκόοις ἀτελὲς οὐδέν).[239] God comes near to those who are worthy of being benefitted, those who love wisdom and knowledge: the divine riches (θεῖος πλοῦτος) are poured out upon the worthy.[240] Yet, God gives specifically according to the capacity of the recipient, depending on where he lies on the spectrum of worthiness. One of Philo's dictum about giving is, "do not give as much as you are able . . . but as much as the recipient is able to receive" (μὴ ὅσα δύνασαι χαρίζου . . . ἀλλ᾽ ὅσα ἱκανὸς ὁ δεόμενός ἐστι δέξασθαι).[241] God gives not according to his own power but with a view towards what the recipient can handle, for their betterment.[242]

One could exponentially multiply example texts for this discussion, but Philo is remarkably consistent in his understanding of God as a giver to the worthy.[243] But as I have tried to show, we must re-think what "worth" was for Philo. Worth for Philo is a broad—and therefore, somewhat vague—category that receives definition by paying attention to his understanding of virtue. Furthermore, another important facet of worth is that humans must not consider themselves worthy to receive.[244] Philo discusses three errors humans

238 *Mut*. 115.

239 *Migr*. 73.

240 *Migr*. 56–58 and *Post*. 139. Cf. *Praem*. 100–01; *Spec*. 2.218–19.

241 *Post*. 142–45.

242 Cf. *Deus* 80.

243 Cf. e.g. also *Ebr*. 106; *Plant*. 91–93; *Praem*. 116; *Leg*. 2.86; 3.163–64.

244 Cf. *Her*. 33.

often have in relation to God as Cause and Giver: first, due to forgetfulness, some are not thankful;[245] second, some overestimate their own power and consider themselves the source of the good things they have;[246] and third, some people consider themselves worthy to receive gifts from God because of their manifest virtue (ὥστε ἄξιοι διὰ ταῦτα καὶ παρὰ θεῷ χαρίτων νομισθῆναι).[247] In response to this third error, Philo quotes Deut 9.5: "Not because of your righteousness nor because of the holiness of your heart did you enter this land to inherit it," but because God has chosen to destroy the wickedness of the nations that inhabit them and "so that God might establish the covenant that he swore to your fathers," which are symbolically God's gifts (αἱ χάριτες αὐτοῦ). Consequently, it is not one's worth that makes one worthy to receive from God; it is the realization of one's God-given worthiness, which means that, no one is worthy of their own accord.[248] Being virtuous and thus worthy is a condition for receiving gifts from God, but that condition is itself already a gift from God.

As we have seen in the discussion of *Leg*. 3.77–106 in the previous chapter, Philo can and does press behind human acts that seem to constitute worth, as well as God's giving in response to human acts, to show that there always exists a prior worthy nature given by God. Thus, Noah found grace before God not because of any prior deed (μηδὲν πρότερον ἐργασάμενον) but because Noah means "rest" or "just"—he has an excellent nature from birth. Likewise, with Abraham, Philo explains that he was given a new homeland not because of anything he had done prior—he was a sinful Chaldean—but rather because God birthed Abraham as a worthy figure. The other examples follow this same basic pattern: each person did nothing to warrant their favor from God but rather received a prior worthy and virtuous nature that constitutes them as worthy to receive. The virtuous lives of these great biblical characters who receive many gifts from God are simply an extension and development of that with which they had already been gifted. Worth and virtue precede receiving from God, but God's implanting virtue within the soul and arousing the person towards perfection precede one's being virtuous and thus, worthy.

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245 Deut 8.18 rights this error, as Philo says the moment that one does not forget God is whenever one does not forget oneself. To remember oneself is to contemplate one's own nothingness (οὐδένεια) and God's exceeding greatness.

246 For the second, Moses reproves such humans in Deut 8.17: it is the "Lord God who gives strength."

247 *Sacr*. 54–57.

248 Thus, Zeller, *Charis*, 72: "Erlösung besteht letztlich, könnte man sagen, in der dankbaren Anerkennung des alles bewirkenden Schöpfers."

4.3 *Faith and Thanksgiving*

At the end of Moses' life, he sang a "hymn of praise" to God, his "final thanksgiving" (τελευταίαν . . . εὐχαριστίαν) in his physical body, thanking God for the "new and unprecedented gifts" (καιναῖς καὶ οὐ ταῖς ἐν ἔθει χάρισιν) God had granted him from his "birth until old age."[249] Moses sang his song before the assembly so that all might learn to give similar thanksgivings to God. From Moses' song, and his Law, one learns the necessity of attributing all good things to God in faith and as thanksgiving.

Accordingly, for Philo the virtuous life is one of faith and thanksgiving; that is, the virtuous life is one that is always directed towards God in gratitude.[250] Thus, Philo can call faith "the most perfect of the virtues" (τὴν τελειοτάτην ἀρετῶν, πίστιν);[251] Abraham, when he came to an "unswerving and firm conception" of God as the supreme cause, was the first to believe in God. He thus acquired faith, "the most certain of the virtues."[252] Philo interprets Deut 10.20—"you shall cleave to him"—as referring to faith and piety, for "these virtues adapt and unite the mind to imperishable nature."[253] Perfect piety dispels self-love and admires the true source of gifts.[254] Those who ascribe all things to divine grace are those who love virtue, being the progeny of Seth and not Cain.[255] In the end, even Abraham when he drew near to God "perceived that he was dust and ashes."[256] The human mind, then, should always seek to take leave of itself and to fly to the "mind of the universe," the one true cause of all things.[257] Whatever stands in the way of faith that properly conceives of God as cause and in the way of thanksgiving for his causation must be eradicated from the soul.

As Philo states, "it is the most suitable work for God to give benefits and for created beings to give thanks" (εὐεργετεῖν . . . εὐχαριστεῖν).[258] The faith that produces thanksgiving is itself a virtue, and therefore a gift from God. God's grace is all-encompassing: God creates humans, gives virtue and causes that virtue to come to fruition, by which they are worthy to receive from God, who loves to

249 *Virt*. 72–74.

250 On thanksgiving, see esp. LaPorte, *Eucharistia*; Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship*, 175–89; Zeller, *Charis*, 111–18.

251 *Her*. 91.

252 *Virt*. 216. Cf. *Abr*. 270.

253 *Migr*. 132.

254 Cf. *Congr*. 130.

255 Cf. *Post*. 35, 41–42.

256 *Deus* 161.

257 *Leg*. 3.29.

258 *Plant*. 130. We will return to Philo's understanding of thanksgiving in chapter 5.

give; their faithful and grateful response to God's giving, finally, then, is nothing other than a gift. As Philo states, gratitude is "not the work of the soul, but of the one who shines thanksgiving in it."[259] I began the first chapter by discussing how Philo's piety centered upon recognizing and acknowledging God as the cause of all good things. After two chapters of putting various aspects of Philo's theology in place we see that nothing needs to be altered: God causes and gives *all good things*, without exception.

5 Conclusion

"Indeed, as the beginnings are God's, so also the ends are God's (ὥσπερ αἱ ἀρχαὶ θεοῦ, οὕτως καὶ τὰ τέλη θεοῦ)."[260] Philo was a theologian of divine generosity: to explain who God is, what God's greatest gift is, the makeup of human ontology, or how it is necessary to live, Philo would point to God's acts of creative giving, which establish order from disorder. From beginning to end, all good things are gifts from the creator God.

In this chapter I have argued three main points, which fill out the grammatical rules I proposed in chapter one and demonstrate how Philo can consider all good things—even human action, virtue, and worth—to be God's gifts. First, the God who causes and creates all good things has placed humanity in a created sphere that is ordered for their benefit. Nature, Law, and Logos not only order the world but also enable and empower humans to live according the standards that God has built into the cosmos, the result of which is virtue. Philo unites cosmology and ethics vis-à-vis divine gift-giving because his beneficent God is the Creator. Second, the hyper-generous God is also the creator and giver of the virtues: he plants virtue within the human soul and is the cause of their growth and fruition in virtuous living. God gives the standards for virtuous living and he is the one who brings about the fulfillment of those standards in worthy recipients. Third, since God is a God of order, and is a supremely wise God, he gives to those who are worthy of his gifts. However, "worth" is not the result of toil and striving to please a hypercritical God. Rather, it is an aspect of God's own generosity. Thus, Philo's view of divine grace can be summarized as *cosmological and causative*: God's grace is the cause of the creation of the cosmos and it is constitutive of all good human life and action, which is

259 *Leg.* 1.82.

260 *Her.* 120.

life according to the fabric of the cosmos.[261] Divine grace is therefore prior to human worth, which is a condition, not cause, for God's giving.

Accordingly, when we speak about divine gifts to the "worthy," we have to let Philo define the concept.[262] Standing behind the concept of "worth" is a whole system of thought—as detailed in these two chapters—which asserts and assumes that all good things must be attributed to God the good cause, and therefore that humans are incapable of good on their own. Virtuous living is an unpacking of God's gifts, the absence of abuse or rejection of divine generosity. Thus, I established an important point at the beginning: even in those texts in which it seems as though humans are striving for virtue, those who advance into the deeper mysteries learn that it is actually all God's doing. Perhaps paradoxically, through virtuous living one learns that everything is God's doing. Philo, therefore, cannot be labeled a synergist: one does not work with God, such that the divine and human agencies are separable. One enjoys—or rejects—God's gifts, such that all good human actions are predicated on divine giving, while proper use of God's gifts must be attributed to God, not the human agent. The only thing that humans cause is evil; everything else must be attributed to God.

Thus, worth is constituted by divine generosity; and as I argued, Philo unpacks the binary categories of unworthy/worthy with his spectrum of evil, progressing, and perfect. It is only *those who are not progressing at all* that are unworthy of divine gifting; that is, one is unworthy through rejecting or misusing God's generosity. There is always an essential unfit to God's gifts for those who are not perfect, since in relation to God all are unworthy and the purpose of God's gifts is the betterment of the recipient: the God who creates makes order from disorder. In relation to God, none are perfect and therefore none are worthy, and what divine gifts do is to increase that fit between God and the individual, by drawing them closer to God's own perfection.

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261 Cf. *Cher*. 28: humans are the "instruments" through which God the cause acts. As Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 167 states, Philo is speaking about "Joseph's dreams, but the application extends to all human activity."

262 This is the main issue with the treatment of Philo in Carson, "Divine Sovereignty," 148–64, who has a tendency to rush into comparisons with Paul too quickly. Problematic also is the use of "merit" in Harrison, *Grace*, 114–33.

CHAPTER 3

The Christ-Event within the Divine Gift-Economy

> Grace that is not disruptive is not grace . . . Grace, strictly speaking, does not mean continuity but radical discontinuity, not reform but revolution . . . not the perfecting of virtues but the forgiveness of sins, not improvement but resurrection from the dead.[1]

1 Introduction

Like his Alexandrian kin, Paul could argue for the gift-nature of all things: "For from him and through him and for him are all things" (Rom 11.36; cf. 1 Cor 8.6). Asking the Corinthians, "what do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Cor 4.7), the correct answer for Paul would have been, "nothing." The Corinthians received all things as a gift in Christ: "in every way you have been made rich in him" (1 Cor 1.4–5). But this formulation points to the divergent aspect of Paul's gift-theology when compared to Philo: for Philo humans have received all things as a gift because God is the creator of all things; for Paul believers receive all things because God has given Jesus.

This first chapter on Paul will mirror the first chapter on Philo, as will the second chapter on Paul the second on Philo. Chapter one examined in Philo who God is as Giver, what kinds of gifts God gives, and to whom God gives; this laid the groundwork for the argument that God for Philo is unquestionably a God who wisely and graciously gives, specifically to the worthy. This chapter will seek to place the corresponding focus on Paul's understanding of grace: that God as Giver is the one who has given Jesus Christ for the ungodly, a gift which is also given by Jesus. As the first chapter on Philo set up the second to discuss the interrelated issues of human agency, how worth is construed, and how one becomes able to receive gifts, this chapter will set up the second chapter on Paul to examine more closely the problem of human unworthiness, human agency and sin, and how one receives the gift. We cannot force Philo and Paul into the same mold, but there is a similarity of structure to their thought that allows for orderly comparisons.

Philo works from the preconception that *everything is gift*: the cosmos is God's primary benefaction, and the purpose of divine giving is to bring humans

1 G. Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 16.

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in line with the cosmic order. The purpose of this chapter is to argue that, in distinction from Philo, Paul works from the preconception that *Christ is the gift*, the supreme manifestation of divine grace, and divine giving for Paul is defined from the particularity of that event outwards. There is a concentration of generosity in the Christ-event, the fundamental gift within a matrix of gifts that are mutually interdependent on and related to God's giving of Jesus. For Paul, the Christ-gift is so revolutionary and revelatory of who God is that, after the Christ-event, every gift is a Christ-shaped gift, and history is therefore interpreted by Paul through this event. God is identified not *primarily* as the cause and creator of all things nor by his gracious nature, but as the one who has given Jesus Christ. Accordingly, it is central for Paul that the Christ-event is the gift that effects the re-creation of its unworthy recipients through their reception of the Holy Spirit. God is an incommensurate giver not primarily because of his perfection, but because he inscrutably gives to the unworthy, and therefore without consideration of the normal standards of worth. If Philo's gift-theology stresses the universality of gifts, the fittingness of the recipient, and divine rationality, Paul's gift-theology stresses the particularity of the gift, the recipient's lack of fit, and divine inscrutability.

The bulk of this chapter will consist of exegesis of Paul—first Galatians, then Romans—to explore how Paul interprets the Christ-event as gift, examining the associations Paul makes between the Christ-event and the concept of gift, as well as how the Christ-event is related to other gifts (e.g., the Holy Spirit, righteousness). As we will see, Paul's concept of divine generosity takes its shape from the particularity of the Christ-event as a gift given for and to the unworthy, and all other aspects of his thought on gift revolve around this point. Since this historical event is God's grace, it is important for speaking about who God is and for interpreting God's actions throughout history. Furthermore, it is equally significant that Paul situates Christ alongside God as the gift-giver. Philo will appear throughout for comparison, and the chapter will conclude by drawing together some points about how Paul and Philo relate on particular themes.

2 On Not Rejecting God's Gift: The Christ-Gift in Galatians

Martyn has argued that Galatians answers two questions: "What time is it?" and "In what cosmos do we actually live?"[2] If Philo were asked these questions,

2 J.L. Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Doubleday, 1997), 23. I am not arguing that temporal categories frame everything in Galatians; rather, Martyn's questions provide a way into a comparison between Paul and Philo.

he might respond, somewhat quizzically, "today," and "in God's cosmos." For Philo, the "name of eternity is today."[3] Time came into existence either concurrently with, or imperceptibly after, the creation of the world;[4] while the perceptible world revolves, the "nature of time shines forth." For God, time is neither future nor past but immutably "now" (μόνον ὑφέστηκεν), and though humans measure time, they live in this unending now, which is framed and ordered by the God who does not change.[5] By contrast, for Paul, in Christ God has split history into two: there is a time "before faith came" and an "after" now that faith has come (3.23–25).[6] For Philo, "before" and "after" are concepts used only to understand the "now." For Paul, "before" is the time of this "present evil age" (1.4), when Paul persecuted the church (1.13–14) before "I" died to the Law (2.19–20); when Gentiles lived in servitude to false gods (4.8–9) and Jews were enslaved to the "elements of the world" (4.3); in short, the epoch during which "scripture confined all things under sin" (3.22). There is only the "before," from which humans are rescued, and the "after," when "God sent his son" at the "fullness of time" (4.4). The Christ-event creates this disjunctive time.

If Philo's God is beneficent in his ordering of the world and time, Paul's God is beneficent in his interruption of time, which recreates the world through crucifixion (6.14). Accordingly, for Paul and Philo, humans exist in different kinds of world-time, which is indicative of their different views of divine generosity. For Philo, the "age" of this world is ordered, and humans are capable of living virtuously and thus worthily of God's gifts. For Paul, the age in which humans exist precludes the possibility of a fitting gift; the gift is inherently incongruous to its recipient because the sending of Christ is the solution to this age, neither a fitting gift nor the fulfillment of the "before."[7]

Accordingly, when Paul speaks about divine χάρις in Galatians, he uses the word with a specific content. Paul argues that the Christ-event is the singular

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3 *Fug*. 56–57. Cf. *Leg*. 3.25.

4 Cf. *Opif*. 26. See R. Sorabji, *Time, Creation, and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983) on this question more broadly.

5 *Deus* 32. See esp. Lauer, "Philo's Concept of Time," 39–46.

6 A. Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (trans. R. Brassier; Stanford: SUP, 2003), 43: "The formula according to which God sent us his Son signifies primarily an intervention within History, one through which it is, as Nietzsche will put it, 'broken in two,' rather than governed by a transcendent reckoning in conformity with the laws of an epoch."

7 On Paul's anthropology in relation to other Second-Temple Jewish authors, see T. Laato, *Paul and Judaism: An Anthological Approach* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995). I take Philo to be an example of the anthropological optimism Laato argues is characteristic of Judaism. Cf. also S. Westerholm, "Paul's Anthropological 'Pessimism' in Its Jewish Context," in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment* (ed. J.M.G. Barclay and S.J. Gathercole; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 71–98.

instantiation of God's generosity in the cosmos and in history, and it is a gift given irrespective of worth, thus going to unfitting recipients, both Jew and Gentile. Paul thus strikes a Christocentric note to ensure that the Galatians understand where their allegiance should lie: in the truth of the gospel (2.14), not in Jewish or Gentile ways of living on their own or as a soteriological supplement to God's act in Christ. Galatians opens and closes with Christological designations of grace, with four of the seven uses of χάρις relating to God's gift of Christ to the undeserving (1.3–4; 2.21; 5.4; cf. 6.18).[8]

The Galatians receive grace and peace "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." The single ἀπό designates God and Jesus as the united source. God is the one who "raised [Jesus] from the dead" (1.1),[9] while Jesus is the one who "gave himself (τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτόν) for our sins," to "rescue" humans from this "evil age" (1.4). Galatians 1.1–4 thus presents a compact description of divine gift by defining who the Givers are and the need of the recipients: God who raises the crucified Jesus; Jesus who gave himself; and sinful humans. Hence, Paul begins to associate χάρις with the Christ-event that saves from sin and an evil age.[10] As de Boer states, the "remainder of the letter . . . may be read as Paul's unpacking of this encapsulation of the gospel for the Galatians."[11]

In 2.15 Paul differentiates Jews "by nature" from Gentile "sinners." Unlike most Jewish authors, Philo theoretically could not make this distinction.[12] He could see the sinfulness of the Egyptians or Chaldeans, and *therefore* make a distinction, but his anthropology is universal: all are constructed the same way, all can live virtuously. Consequently, the way Paul removes the distinction also would not satisfy Philo: that no person (οὐ ἄνθρωπος) is justified by "works of the Law" (2.16). Although Philo did not use δικαιόω like Paul,[13] Philo could neither say that all stand in need of justification nor that ἔργα νόμου would not achieve it. Though Philo's wording is different, he uses similar phrases—for similar purposes—and remains a largely untapped comparison.

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8 For the other three references (1.6, 15; 2.9), see next chapter.

9 Thus, Martyn, *Galatians*, 85: "this one God has now identified himself by his act in Jesus Christ, making that act, indeed, the primal mark of his identity."

10 M. Winger, "From Grace to Sin: Names and Abstractions in Paul's Letters," *NovT* 41 (1999): 153–54 claims that the introductory formulas convey a general sense of favor, but that since "the immediate contexts do not refer to any particular way in which this favor might be manifested, there is apparently no criterion of identity for this χάρις." If this *were* true of any letter, it is not true of Galatians.

11 M.C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 28.

12 Cf. e.g. *Spec.* 1.54, where it is "some from the Gentiles" who do not honor God properly.

13 Philo can use δικαιόω with νόμος as subject, concerning what the Law deems fit for human life; cf. e.g. *Spec.* 1.298; 2.213; 3.180.

As Philo notes, "good people" (ἄνθρωποι ἀγαθοί) accomplish the Laws "by works" (τοὺς νόμους ἔργοις ἐπιτελούντων), which are brought to perfection by God's grace, of course (τελεσφορηθήσεσθαι χάριτι).[14] God rewards "good things" for their similarity to himself.[15] Thus, Noah found favor before God because he rested from injustice and sin (ἀδίκημα, ἁμάρτημα).[16] Quoting Deut 16.20, Philo says that the Law has been given so that we might "pursue what is just in a just manner" (δικαίως τὸ δίκαιον διώκειν; cf. Deut 16.20; 1 Kings 8.32), to cultivate δικαιοσύνην καὶ πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν τοῖς συγγενέσιν ἔργοις αὐτῆς—and *not* opposite actions.[17] One hears the Law, but the ears cannot be trusted;[18] it must be stamped on "the ruling part" and put into action by the hands without delay.[19] It is God's judgment (δικαιώσαντος θεοῦ) that effects the destruction of the ungodly (πρὸς τὴν κατὰ τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀπώλειαν),[20] while God has "thought fit" to reward the virtuous (ἐδικαίωσε γὰρ ὁ θεὸς γέρας τῷ σπουδαίῳ παρασχεῖν).[21] What happens to those who transgress the Laws? Curses. While God gladly welcomes and rewards the proselyte who comes to God willingly, the noble born who lives contrary to virtue (and therefore, Law) is dragged down into Tartarus, to be an example.[22]

How, for Philo, is one worthy before God? No other Jew stressed divine grace more than Philo, but the answer would still be: by doing ἔργα νόμου, virtuous actions, the virtue itself traceable to God's grace—a point that should be clear from the previous chapters. Philo never uses *this precise phrase*, but making exact phrasing a necessity only obscures the similarity of content: the one who receives God's grace is the one who does the Law, who becomes a fitting recipient through the use of God's gifts. The problem, for Paul, is that if God operated this way, he could give gifts to no one.

Paul makes clear that ἔργα νόμου both cannot justify and are what set Jews apart from Gentiles: a disastrous combination.[23] Rather, justification is by faith

14 *Praem*. 126. Cf. *Det*. 68.

15 Accordingly, the "only just God" (*Somn*. 2.194) is the "defender and champion of the just" (*Abr*. 232).

16 *Leg*. 3.77.

17 *Det*. 18. Cf. *Spec*. 2.13.

18 Cf. Gal 3.1–5; Rom 10.17!

19 *Spec*. 4.137–38.

20 *Mos*. 1.94–96.

21 *Praem*. 120. See also *Somn*. 2.174.

22 *Praem*. 126, 152.

23 As G. Stanton, "The Law of Moses and the Law of Christ—Galatians 3.1–6.2," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law* (ed. J.D.G. Dunn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 103–04 argues, "Paul's first use of the phrase 'works of the law' in 2:16a is triggered by the issues which dominate

in Christ.[24] The contrast between 2.15–16 not only signals that the Jew-Gentile distinction is invalid, but it also links Jews with Gentiles as sinners who need to be justified. Jews are identified with that "fundamental sinfulness" that is "characteristic of Gentiles,"[25] for all exist in this present evil age, under the power of the flesh. Justification by faith problematizes ethnic distinctions because justification reveals the problem of all humans to be sin.[26] In 2.17 Paul further undercuts any distinction, saying "we" were found to be sinners in seeking to be justified in Christ, where "we" are Jewish Christians.[27] Without the hamartiological distinction, there is no reason to deny table fellowship; and table fellowship does not cause sin. Furthermore, this fellowship does not make Christ a minister of sin; rather, the issue is that rebuilding the Law makes one a transgressor: "by returning to the law at mealtimes, they rebuild what they once destroyed, the very system that handed them the guilty verdict."[28]

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the preceding discussion in Gal 2, circumcision and food laws. But as the initial listeners heard the argument of the following verses unfold, they were left in no doubt that Paul was concerned about far more than these 'test cases of Jewish distinctiveness over against Gentiles.' "

24 The phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ is an exegetical hornets' nest, and we need not enter into the debate here. To start, see the debate between R.B. Hays and J.D.G Dunn in R.B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 249–98; the recent collection of essays in M.F. Bird and P.M. Sprinkle, eds., *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010); and, to show my cards, R.B. Matlock, "The Rhetoric of Πίστις in Paul: Galatians 2.16, 3.22, Romans 3.22, and Philippians 3.9," *JSNT* 30 (2007): 173–202.

25 J. Lambrecht, "Paul's Reasoning in Galatians 2:11–21," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, 58.

26 Cf. T.G. Gombis, "The 'Transgressor' and the 'Curse of the Law': The Logic of Paul's Argument in Galatians 2–3," *NTS* 53 (2007): 87: "Jews must locate themselves alongside gentiles in seeking justification, and are therefore forced to fellowship along with these 'sinners' in the newly constituted people of God."

27 I view 2.17 as a *realis*. As D. Hunn, "Christ Versus the Law: Issues in Galatians 2:17–18," *CBQ* 72 (2010): 539–40 argues, Paul uses ἁμαρτωλοί in 2.15 and 17 in the same way; i.e., sin in 2.17 is not simply post-conversion failure to do the law. For the alternative argument, see J.D.G. Dunn, *The Epistle to The Galatians* (London: A&C Black, 1993), 141.

28 Hunn, "Christ Versus the Law," 546. On the logic that the Law judges those whom it cannot justify, see 542. M. Bachmann, *Sünder oder Übertreter. Studien zur Argumentation in Gal 2,15ff.* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 73–77 and J. Lambrecht, "Transgressors by Nullifying God's Grace," *Bib* 72 (1991): 235 argue that transgression refers to God's will; showing oneself to be a transgressor (2.18) parallels rejecting God's grace (2.20). This is not fully persuasive, but the connection is suggestive.

In 2.19–20, death to and through the Law occurs through co-crucifixion with Christ. The "I" dies to the Law with Christ,[29] in whose death the Law participated by cursing him (3.10–14).[30] Only death with Christ to the Law makes life to God possible; the Law, again, has no power to make one worthy before God, or alive (cf. 3.21). In 2.20 Paul affirms that as faith in Christ results in death through the Law, so living to God is a new life in which the subject is reconstituted dialectically: I no longer live, but Christ lives in me, and the life I now live is one of faith in the self-giving of Christ.[31] That is, life is now constituted in Christ and directed towards Christ in faith; it is cruciform and Christocentric. Paul's definition of this subject-object figure is paramount: the Christ who lives in Paul and in whom Paul places his trust is "the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me" (τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ). Thus, in 2.15–20, faith in Christ is faith in this Christ who lovingly gave himself, and it is by faith that one identifies with Christ's self-giving and the unworthy individual is reconstituted (that is, justified) to live to God in Christ.[32]

In 2.21 Paul draws the argument of 2.15–20 to a conclusion. As commentators often note, for Paul's challengers—as with Philo—the Law would be a constitutive element of God's grace. Torah observance—and thus a Jewish lifestyle—would be a necessary complement to faith in Christ.[33] Paul would not need to argue that God gives gifts; probably not even that Christ is God's grace. Rather, he must argue that Christ alone is God's grace, which precludes grace

29 Cf. Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians, 1535, Chapters 1–4* (LW 26; St. Louis: Concordia, 1963), 157: "He does not say: 'I am free of, or liberated from, the Law for a while' or 'I am the lord of the Law.' All he says is: 'I have died to the Law.' "

30 *Pace* de Boer, *Galatians*, 160. Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 257; Gombis, "Logic of Paul's Argument," 90.

31 On the relationship between justification and participation in this text, see esp. S. Chester, "It Is No Longer I Who Live: Justification by Faith and Participation in Christ in Martin Luther's Exegesis of Galatians," *NTS* 55 (2009): 315–37. Cf. S. Schauf, "Galatians 2.20 in Context," *NTS* 52 (2006): 99: "crucifixion with Christ is a common experience of Jewish and Gentile Christians, indeed, the common experience which justifies them before God."

32 Thus, Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 14: "The Christian subject does not preexist the event he declares . . . Thus, the extrinsic conditions of his existence or identity will be argued against."

33 Cf. de Boer, *Galatians*, 144; J.L. Martyn, "A Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles," in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (London: T&T Clark, 1997), 13: "Whatever [the Teachers] may be saying about Christ, the Law is itself both the foundation and the essence of their good news."

in or by means of the Law. Given Paul's statement—"I do not reject the grace of God" (τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ)[34]—it is likely that Paul is responding not only to such a Law-plus-Christ position but also the claim that he skews justification by eliding the Law from the equation. As Martyn states, "For Paul . . . the locus of God's grace is defined by the locus of God's rectifying power."[35] That power is the Christ-event.[36] If righteousness came διὰ νόμου, then Christ's death would have been "in vain" (δωρεάν). Since both Jews and Gentiles die "to the Law" in order to "live to God," it would be impossible to locate the operation of God's grace in the Law; the interrelated singularity (without Law) and incongruity (for sinners) of the Christ-event leaves nothing for humans to do (or be) to make themselves worthy recipients of God's gift. Accordingly, the Christ-event renders all soteriological and hamartiological distinctions between Jews and Gentiles null and void. Justification in Christ means that living Ἰουδαϊκῶς has no intrinsic preeminence over living ἐθνικῶς but that everything is measured by whether one walks in step with the truth of the gospel. Neither Law nor the absence of Law increase the fit between the individual and God's grace.

This association of grace, Christ, and justification also occurs in 5.4.[37] Paul asserts that Christ has set believers free "for freedom" (τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ; 5.1) and that the Galatians should not place themselves again under the "yoke of slavery." Circumcision makes Christ of no worth and obligates the person "to do the whole Law" and therefore to seek to be justified in the Law (ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε). That person is then "estranged from Christ" (κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ) and has "fallen from grace" (τῆς χάριτος ἐξεπέσατε). Unsurprisingly, the two phrases are parallel descriptions of the consequences of locating justification in the Law, because doing so is a failure to understand Christ as God's gift which is given to the unworthy, not those who locate worth in the Law. To reassert the position of the Law after the receipt of the Christ-gift would effectively be a denial of one's participation in Christ's crucifixion—through and to the Law—by which one lives to God as a reconstituted agent (2.19–20). Furthermore, "in Christ Jesus" it is not only circumcision that does not matter, but also uncircumcision (5.6). Again, neither Jewish (Torah) nor Gentile (non-Torah) ways of life can figure an individual as a fitting recipient of the incongruously given Christ-gift.

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34 Eastman, *Significance of Grace*, 83 labels ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ a subjective genitive; but this is too limiting.

35 Martyn, *Galatians*, 259–60.

36 *Pace* Dunn, *Galatians*, 147: Paul "has in mind 'the grace of God' manifested in his calling and in his successful missionary work."

37 On this text, see esp. J.M.G. Barclay, "Paul, the Gift and the Battle over Gentile Circumcision: Revisiting the Logic of Galatians," *ABR* 58 (2010): 36–56.

As an appropriate capstone, the letter ends where it began: "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; 6.18).

In Galatians, nothing instigates the giving of the Christ-gift, establishing progress or fit between the "before" of enslaving sin and the "now" of the life-giving gift in the Spirit.[38] Abraham believes and is justified because scripture "pre-proclaimed the good news" (προευηγελίσατο; 3.6–9), just as the promises were given to Abraham and to his seed, Christ (3.15–18).[39] Abraham thus stands in relation to the gift, believing in the promise;[40] and the Law does not intervene between the giving of the promise to Abraham and its fulfillment in Christ. Rather, "God has given to Abraham through the promise" (3.18). Likewise, Israel was not progressing in worthiness before God; she, like the Gentiles, was enslaved (4.3). Accordingly, when Christ is sent at the fullness of time, Israel is redeemed and receives her adoption (υἱοθεσία). Accordingly, history does not provide a foundation for the Christ-gift, in which individual and cosmos are crucified and new creation established (6.14–15).[41] This newness of the Christ-gift is an aspect of its incongruity: the gift supports no systems of worth—Jewish or Gentile—because it is not given as the fulfillment of any cultural system or trajectories but as an unconditionally fulfilled promise for those who believe.

If for Philo, doing the Law constitutes one as righteous (i.e. virtuous), and divine gifts are what enable such works, for Paul, works of the Law cannot justify sinful humans. Indeed, the Law (rightly) curses those sinners who transgress it. Similarly, for Philo the playing field for Jews and Gentiles is level; all can be virtuous, all can be "Israel." For Paul, the playing field is level because all are sinners in need. Accordingly, in Galatians we find a strong identification

38 Cf. K. Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and The Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 6: "New levels of God's gifts are not predictable from previous ones—for example, God's incarnation is not predictable from God's gift of existence to creatures in creating them or from God's gift of covenant fellowship with Israel."

39 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 103: "Abraham . . . anticipates what could be called a universalism of the Jewish site; in other words, he anticipates Paul."

40 Cf. J.C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980), 97: "In Galatians 3 the actual content of the promise is Christ (v. 19b). . ." For other possibilities, see S.K. Williams, "Promise in Galatians: A Reading of Paul's Reading of Scripture," *JBL* 107 (1988): 709–20.

41 Cf. Barclay, "Logic of Galatians," 53: Paul "does not find any historical sequence of 'believers' from Abraham onwards, and the only continuity he traces before Christ is the continuity of the divine promise, not a covenant continuity stretching through Israel's history." Cf. S. Grindheim, "Not Salvation History, but Salvation Territory: The Main Subject Matter of Galatians," *NTS* 59 (2013): 101.

of God's grace as the Christ-event, the unfitting gift, that justifies Jews and Gentiles by reconstituting them as new creation.[42] Jesus gave himself for our *sins* and to rescue humanity from the present *evil* age and the Law with its *curse*. Consequently, inherent to the association between Christology and gift is the incongruity of the gift, which does not invite Gentile sinners to a Jewish party but addresses the problem of universal sin. All whom "scripture confined under sin" (3.22) may receive the gift by faith from the God of the Christ-event.

3 The Gift of God in Romans

Turning from Galatians to Romans, one can note "a dramatic difference between the christocentrism of Galatians and the theocentrism of Romans."[43] But although Paul speaks in a "theocentric" register in Romans, his understanding of divine gift remains remarkably Christological. One event in history is where Paul locates God's grace, and he understands all other points in history from the vantage point of this event, from the reality it both creates and reveals. We must pay attention again to how Paul identifies God's grace in relation to Jesus. As in Galatians, in Romans 3.21–26 and 5.1–21 Paul identifies divine grace as the Christ-event, given to unfitting recipients. This Christological identification then shapes his reading of Abraham (4.1–25) and Israel's history (9–11).

3.1 *Romans 3.21–26: The Christ-Gift within the Theatre of Sin*

For Philo the κόσμος is the "first and greatest and most perfect" of God's works, structured immutably by God's Law according to which one may become virtuous.[44] When we turn to Romans 3, we see Paul using these concepts differently: the Law (ὁ νόμος) speaks so that "the whole world" (πᾶς ὁ κόσμος) might be accountable to God (3.19), for no one is righteous, no one seeks for God. Rather than providing a way for humans to be worthy before God, the Law displays that all are sinners. Since God's judgment is just, he gives to all what they deserve: wrath and anger to those who do evil (2.8; cf. 2.2; 1.28–32), and

42 That is, the gospel offers not simply a new way of life to its sinful recipients, but new life. Cf. A. Badiou, *Ethics* (London: Verso, 2001), 43 who speaks of the "subject" that was "absolutely nonexistent 'before' the event." See also J.L. Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), *passim*; J.L. Martyn, "Epilogue: An Essay in Pauline Meta-Ethics," in *Divine and Human Agency*, 178–83.

43 B.R. Gaventa, "The Singularity of the Gospel: A Reading of Galatians," in *Pauline Theology, Volume I* (ed. J.M. Bassler; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 150.

44 Cf. *Deus* 106–08.

glory, honor, and immortality to those who seek eternal life (2.7).[45] God "will render to each according to his works." The problem, however, is that "none are righteous" (3.10), and therefore all should come to ruin on the day of God's judgment (2.16). Consequently, after letting scripture detail the fact that "both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin" (3.9–20), Paul interjects: "But now." For Philo, as we saw above, νυνὶ δέ would be an assertion of the immutable present. For Paul, the νυνὶ δέ that opens 3.21–26 marks the intervention of divine grace into sin-caused hopelessness, pointing to the "impossible possibility" of the justification of sinners, a gift given to the unworthy.[46]

Paul's summary statement in 3.23 that "all have sinned and lack the glory of God" is paralleled by the dense response that all are "justified freely in his grace (that is) through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (δικαιούμενοι δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ; 3.24).[47] Paul thus speaks of justification as occurring as a gift and in the gift: "justified as a gift in his grace" (3.24). What is the relationship between δωρεάν and τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι vis-à-vis "being justified"?

Bultmann argued that δωρεάν "emphasizes the gift-character of grace" such that the "divine deed of grace is . . . a *gift* of grace." If "grace" is the Christ-event—"God's eschatological deed" by which he judges and therefore justifies sinners—then δωρεάν clarifies that this gift comes "without price."[48] In response, Doughty argued that the "real significance of the phrase . . . is precisely the *reverse*."[49] That is, δωρεάν shows the "grace-character of the gift."[50] Doughty thus agrees with Reumann that δωρεάν is essentially emphatic redundancy.[51] Yet such assumed redundancy would not make sense in Paul's context; no one would assume that saying a gift is given "as a gift" would mean it is given "freely," that is, to the unworthy, without preconditions, etc.[52]

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45 On Romans 2, see esp. Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness*, chap. 5.

46 K. Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. E.C. Hoskyns; 6th ed.; Oxford: OUP, 1968), 92.

47 This righteousness is, as Harrison, *Grace*, 223 calls it, "novel," or in the helpful term of S. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 273, "extraordinary." That is, it defies the normal means by which one would be righteous. The relationship between righteousness and grace in 3.24 is similar to what we will see in 5.15.

48 Bultmann, *New Testament*, 289–90.

49 D.J. Doughty, "The Priority of ΧΑΡΙΣ," *NTS* 19 (1973): 169.

50 Doughty, "Priority," 170.

51 J. Reumann, "The Gospel of the Righteousness of God," *Interp* 20 (1966): 441. Cf. J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (Dallas: Word, 1988), 168; E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. G.W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 96.

52 *Pace* Harrison, *Grace*, 224 n. 44 who claims that δωρεάν was "standard benefaction parlance" for the "free gift." What a "free gift" would be in the Greco-Roman benefaction

Philo rarely uses the adverb δωρεάν, but one of his uses is instructive. In *Ios*. 249, Philo describes the kindness of Joseph towards his brothers. Joseph not only did not kill them, but he also provided food for them "as a gift" (δωρεάν) *as though* they were "worthy of the gift" (ὡς χάριτος ἀξίοις).[53] Joseph's brothers, of course, did not deserve Joseph's gift; but in giving to them Joseph acted as though they did. For Philo, then, δωρεάν describes gifts given to those who are worthy of it. If something is given "in the manner of a gift," it is given to a fitting recipient.

Thus, as above, if Philo said justification were given "as a gift," it would be κατὰ νόμον or according to the person's ἀξίωμα. Justification would still be a gift, yet the manner of its giving would be conditioned according to Philo's construction of worth vis-à-vis the divine Giver. Oppositely, for Paul, "being justified" is a result of the revelation of God's righteousness in the Christ-event χωρὶς νόμου and it is given to sinners, those who have no ἀξίωμα, whether κατὰ νόμον or otherwise. Of course, Paul's distinction in 3.21 between God's righteousness being revealed χωρὶς νόμου yet being testified to ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου would be nonsensical to Philo. As Linebaugh argues, it is unlikely that the referent of νόμος is the same in the two phrases: "Paul is . . . saying that the entire sacred corpus, including the Pentateuch (νόμος), witnesses to the revelation of God's righteousness apart from the law given at Sinai (νόμος)."[54] Scripture witnesses to God's act in Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15.3–4), but God's righteousness is revealed apart from the Law.[55] This affirmation is fundamental for Paul—it grounds God's grace as given to unfitting recipients—but it is unthinkable for Philo. For Philo, the Law both declares what virtue is (and righteousness is a key virtue)[56] and also displays how one becomes virtuous.[57] Accordingly, for Philo gifts are given κατὰ νόμον and thus to the worthy, while for Paul justification occurs

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system is, I think, different from what the "free gift" is in Paul. As DeSilva, "Patronage and Reciprocity," 53 rightly states, "what is surprising about God's grace . . . is not that God gives 'freely and uncoerced': every benefactor, in theory at least, did this." What makes Paul unique is his belief not in God's uncoerced giving, but his giving to the unworthy.

53 See also *Her*. 78–80; *Legat*. 339–43.

54 J.A. Linebaugh, "Debating Diagonal Δικαιοσύνη: The Epistle of Enoch and Paul in Theological Conversation," *EC* 1 (2010): 121 n.43. Contrast R.B. Hays, "Three Dramatic Roles: The Law in Romans 3–4," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law* (ed. J.D.G. Dunn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 151–64, for whom ὁ νόμος always designates the "same collection of texts" but from different "hermeneutical perspectives," as needed by Paul.

55 Cf. Harrison, *Grace*, 224.

56 Cf e.g. *Leg*. 1.72; 3.150; *Post*. 93, 128; *Agr*. 18.

57 *Det*. 18. Cf. *Somn*. 2.175–76; *Spec*. 4.133–34, 179; 2.13; 1.305–06.

χωρὶς νόμου and δωρεάν, thus given to all without distinction (3.22–23).[58] Paul's use of δωρεάν, then, is idiosyncratic. To say that sinners are justified "as a gift" (δωρεάν) means that they receive justification precisely as unfitting recipients.[59]

Justification "as a gift" occurs specifically τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι, which denotes the gift as the location of justification: righteousness "has its origin in God's grace—i.e. in His act of grace accomplished in Christ."[60] Jewett argues that τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι denotes the means by which humans are set right, while διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως denotes the agency through which humans are set right.[61] Redemption, then, is a specification or explication of what the gift is. That is, both τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι and διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ interpret the same event because the latter is the content of the former: sinful humans are justified as an unfitting gift *in* God's grace, that is, *through* the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

As we will see in 5.15–17, the relationship in 3.24 between the gift of righteousness and the Christ-event shows justification to be a gift given to humans by faith. One qualification in the present text, however, is that the Christ-gift effects both the justification of sinners and the justification of God. The νυνὶ δέ of 3.21 anticipates ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ in 3.26, as the time when God's righteousness is manifested apart from the Law in God's putting forth Jesus as ἱλαστήριον (3.25).[62] This event—the gift through redemption—is the "proof" of God's righteousness (ἔνδειξις; 3.25, 26) in the present time, which results in God's being δίκαιος and ὁ δικαιῶν (3.26; cf. 4.5, 8.33). God's righteousness is revealed in the gospel (1.17; 3.21–26), with the gift of Christ being precisely that revelation which justifies God in his words (3.4) and justifies sinful humans as an unfitting gift (3.24). Accordingly, God's righteousness here is both God's acting for salvation according to his righteous nature and the gift of that salvation, as the gift of "being justified" is the enactment of God's righteousness in the eschatological "now" by the Christ-gift.[63] Paul locates divine and human

58 Cf. Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 77: "There is for Paul an essential link between the 'for all' of the universal and the 'without cause.' . . . Only what is absolutely gratuitous can be addressed to all."

59 Cf. T. Engberg-Pedersen, "Gift-Giving and Friendship: Seneca and Paul in Romans 1–8 on the Logic of God's Χάρις and Its Human Response," *HTR* 101 (2008): 25–26.

60 Bultmann, *New Testament*, 284.

61 R. Jewett, *Romans* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2006), 282.

62 On the meaning of ἱλαστήριον, see esp. D.P. Bailey, "Jesus as Mercy Seat" (PhD, University of Cambridge, 1999).

63 Cf. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 284–86. *Pace* Käsemann, *Romans*, 96. See now also D. Burk, "The Righteousness of God (Dikaiosunê Theou) and Verbal Genitives: A Grammatical Clarification," *JSNT* 34 (2012): 346–60.

righteousness in the singular event of Christ, for God is shown to be just in his judgment—and justification—of sinners.[64]

In summary, in 3.21–26 grace is the Christ-event by which God and humans are justified. Accordingly, this single event is the reestablishment of the proper divine-human relationship as a divine gift to unworthy recipients (e.g. 3.23). The Christological focus of this passage is emphatic: God's grace is defined by the Christ-event and this gift is specified as the manifestation, proof, and establishment of God's righteousness. God's righteousness given as a gift in Jesus lacks the correspondence between giver and fitting recipient because such correspondence is impossible for Paul; the gift itself is justification in Christ, which no one deserves.

3.2 *Romans 5.1–11: The Gift and Christian Hope*

In Romans 5.1–11 Paul clarifies and expands his understanding of gift in three ways. First, Paul uses an intriguing metaphor of believers "standing in grace" to describe the eschatological position of those for whom Christ has died. Second, Paul gives an expansive description of divine love as Christ's death for unworthy humans. Third, Paul introduces the role of the Holy Spirit in gift-giving.

3.2.1 Romans 5.2: Living in the Christ-Gift

In Romans 5.1–11 Paul discusses the gift within his already/not-yet scheme. Believers have been justified in Christ but await final salvation (5.1, 9–10). Therefore, a central theme is hope: God's gift of justification in the Christ-event is the basis for the hope believers direct towards God's eschatological rescue from final wrath. It is only "in grace" that one awaits salvation.

Summarizing 3.21–4.25,[65] Paul states, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God."[66] Justification occurs in Christ's blood (5.9), and it is through Christ that believers "have access into this grace in which we stand" (τὴν προσαγωγὴν ἐσχήκαμεν [τῇ πίστει] εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην ἐν ᾗ ἑστήκαμεν). As Dunn claims, "The use of χάρις here . . . is a quite natural extension of its more

64 M.A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 66: "In faith, one takes the side of God in his claim against oneself, giving God justice."

65 On the connections between 3.21–4.25 and 5.1–11, see P.M. McDonald, "Romans 5.1–11 as a Rhetorical Bridge," *JSNT* 40 (1990): 81–87.

66 I still follow the indicative reading of ἔχω in 5.1 because, among other reasons, I believe it fits best with 5.11. The possible parallel with 2 Cor 5–6—that Paul could tell the Corinthians to "be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5.20) after stating that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (5.19)—does not seem legitimate since 2 Cor 5–6 is itself an appeal and Rom 5 is not (even under the subjunctive reading).

normal Pauline sense."[67] The presence of the pronoun ταύτην signals that a specific gift is in view, and this gift-location is explicated in 5.5b-8. 5.9–11 describe the relation between the *now* of the gift and the *to-be* of salvation, while 3–5a describe the reality of believers' lives in the eschatological now. The already/not-yet of 3–5a and 9–11 thus puts the stress on the ground for hope in 5–8, which is itself an explication of 5.1–2a and a springboard into the gift-language in 5.12–21.

Cranfield is correct that καυχώμεθα ἐπ᾽ ἐλπίδι is parallel to ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν and not syntactically subordinate to εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην ἐν ᾗ ἑστήκαμεν.[68] However, 5.2b-5.5a is logically dependent on 5.1–5.2a. The state of affairs described in 5.1–2a is the eschatological "already" of 5.9–11: believers are justified by faith, stand in God's grace, and are at peace with God. 5.2b–5.5a sets forth the way humans exist "between the times" as those who are in grace but must endure θλῖψις. Believers boast not only in God's glory, but in their present afflictions, which produce hope. It is this hope that "does not put to shame" (5.5a). The reason for this steadfast hope is elaborated in 5.5b: "the love of God" (ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ) given through the Holy Spirit. Hope is unswerving in the midst of suffering because it is anchored in God's love, which is not a timeless, abstract love, but a love historically enacted. This love is elaborated in 5.6–8 as the Christ-event, which unpacks the present reality of "being justified by faith" and "standing in grace."[69] Accordingly, to "stand in grace" speaks of the grounding of Christian hope in the eschatological "already," in the justifying event of Christ's death and resurrection, which determines one's life towards final salvation.

3.2.2 Romans 5.6–8: The Christ-Gift as God's Love

Thus, in Rom 5.6–8 Paul explicates the "grace-site" of 5.2 by stressing that Christ's death, which is for the ungodly, defines divine grace.[70] As Hays states, "These verses . . . reveal some of the deep presuppositional structures of Paul's soteriology. They answer the implicit question, 'What do you mean by 'God's love' and on what basis do you claim to have received it?' "[71]

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67 Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 248.

68 C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 259.

69 Cf. Barth, *Romans*, 152: "*I live, yet not I*. This is the grace in which Paul stands."

70 The links between "grace" and "love" in 5.2–8 should be clear; cf. Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 320.

71 R.B. Hays, "Christ Died for the Ungodly: Narrative Soteriology in Paul?," *HBT* 26 (2004): 58.

The γάρ of 5.6 signals that what follows explicates ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ.[72] The double ἔτι, however, is not so clear. Käsemann seems correct to argue that the first ἔτι γάρ modifies the genitive absolute (ὄντων ἡμῶν ἀσθενῶν) and the second ἔτι modifies the verb (ἀπέθανεν).[73] Thus, "while we were *still* weak, *yet* at that time Christ died for the ungodly." This awkward construction emphatically marks the paradoxical time (κατὰ καιρόν) in which Christ died: ἔτι ὄντων ἡμῶν ἀσθενῶν. The first ἔτι signals the καιρός of universal sinfulness into which Christ came (cf. 5.12ff.), while the second marks the nature of his death for the unworthy.[74] The Christ-gift was given at a counterintuitive time to those who did not deserve it.

Even though Paul tries to underscore the incomprehensible nature of Christ's death for the ungodly, a comparison with Philo can sharpen this emphasis. For Philo, the "lover of pleasure" who lives contrary to virtue is ungodly (ἀσεβής);[75] and a few examples of God's dealings with the ungodly will suffice. First, Cain, who "through one action" left "nothing of ungodliness" (οὐδὲν τῶν . . . ἀσεβῶν) neglected, is deserving not of a single death—a punishment devised by human reason—but to "live while always dying," a punishment fitting of the "divine lawcourt."[76] Second, thunderbolts burnt up the ungodly of Sodom and Gomorrah with an "inexpressible" destruction. Accordingly, the "ungodly" (ἀσεβής) were punished for their actions and the virtuous received their deserving reward (ἆθλον).[77] God sets the proper punishments for the ungodly.[78] Third, against the Egyptians the "elements of the universe" (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ παντός) were made hostile to "destroy the land of the ungodly" (τὴν ἀσεβῶν χώραν φθαρῆναι).[79] The God who created the elements can use them "when he wants" to destroy the ungodly. God is a distance removed from the ungodly but walks with the virtuous.[80]

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72 As Käsemann, *Romans*, 135 notes, verses 6–8 "make it clear that ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ is not an objective genitive," as argued by Augustine, Luther, and, surprisingly, N.T. Wright, *The Letter to the Romans* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 517. Nearly all commentators, Wright excluded, take the genitive as subjective.

73 Käsemann, *Romans*, 137.

74 Although ἀσθενής and ἀσεβής are not synonyms, T.W. Martin, "The Good as God (Romans 5.7)," *JSNT* 25 (2002): 58 wrongly argues that Paul "refrains in v. 6 from directly admitting [the Roman Christians] are ungodly. Instead, he describes Christians as weak when Christ died for the ungodly."

75 *Sacr.* 32.

76 *Praem.* 68–70.

77 *Mos.* 2.56–57.

78 Cf. *Ebr.* 223.

79 *Mos.* 1.96.

80 *Mut.* 265, interpreting Num 14.9.

Consequently, the genealogical section of Moses' writings can be divided between the accounts of the punishments of the ungodly (περὶ κολάσεως ἀσεβῶν) and the honors of the just (περὶ τιμῆς δικαίων). For Philo, it is better to die with the pious than cavort with the ungodly, for the former will receive undying life (ἡ ἀθάνατος ζωή), while the latter will receive eternal death (ὁ ἀίδιος θάνατος).[81] It is key that none of this violates God's graciousness; rather, this logic only upholds the fact that God is rationally gracious. Those who refuse his gifts must deal no longer with the God who gives but the Lord who punishes.[82]

Paul understands that Christ's death for the ungodly is absurd—and he celebrates that fact (cf. 1 Cor 1.21–25). In 5.7 Paul digresses from 5.6 to set up an antithesis with 5.8 to underscore further the illogicality (i.e. incongruity) of Christ's death for the ungodly.[83] As Paul states, "for in behalf of a righteous person (ὑπὲρ δικαίου) one would hardly die," which is modified by Paul's next statement that one might "perhaps dare to die for a good person (ὑπὲρ γὰρ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ)."[84] Paul acknowledges that sacrifice for a person of particularly high quality is certainly possible, just as one would rightly give a gift to a fitting recipient. But for the ungodly? As above, Philo illustrates the received wisdom, that fathers should not even die for their sons, but those who have done things "worthy of death" (τῶν ἄξια θανάτου δεδρακότων) should be put to death by themselves.[85] God prefers the smallest group of good people to countless ungodly people (τὸ σπάνιον ἀγαθὸν πρὸ μυρίων ἀδίκων).[86] If dying for another person, one would want to ensure that the character of the "other" was worthy of such self-giving.[87] Accordingly, 5.6 describes the Christ-event as an

81 *Post*. 39. Cf. *Congr*. 87.

82 For close attention to Philo's thought on divine punishment, see Mendelson, "Philo's Dialectic," 104–25.

83 Cf. Käsemann, *Romans*, 137: "The point is that Christ did his saving work at an unexpected and, morally considered, even inappropriate moment. Unworthy, genuinely ungodly people benefitted from it." See also M. Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul's Letters* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995), 306–07.

84 It seems unlikely to me that Paul makes a strong distinction between δίκαιος and ἀγαθός; cf. F. Wisse, "The Righteous Man and the Good Man in Romans v.7," *NTS* 19 (1973): 91–93; for distinction, see A.D. Clarke, "The Good and the Just in Romans 5.7," *TynB* 41 (1990): 128–32. With Clarke, Harrison, *Grace*, 225 sees ὁ ἀγαθός as a reference to a benefactor. More interesting is the argument of Martin, "Good as God," that God is ὁ ἀγαθός.

85 *Spec*. 3.153. Cf. *Somn*. 2.282: what is better than for "the good to live and the wicked to die?"

86 *Migr*. 61.

87 As Philo goes on to explain in *Spec*. 3.154–55, the commandment that fathers should not even die for their sons is given for those who out of excessive goodwill would give themselves for the guilty so that they would not be punished. But, as Philo says, to such a person one must explain, "there is no time for your goodwill" (ἡ εὔνοια ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔχει καιρόν);

unfitting gift, and 5.7 provides a counterexample of a fitting gift. The Christ-gift is "unmotivated love" because "there is in the object to which it is directed nothing at all to which appeal can be made to explain this love."[88]

With an adversative δέ,[89] 5.8 reaffirms that Christ did not give himself for the δίκαιος or ἀγαθός. Instead, "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (ἔτι ἁμαρτωλῶν ὄντων ἡμῶν Χριστὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀπέθανεν). As Keck states, "This is Paul's Christology in a nutshell."[90] Paul makes the radical claim that the Christ-event is the demonstration of God's love for all unfitting recipients: "but God has demonstrated his love for us" (συνίστησιν δὲ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀγάπην εἰς ἡμᾶς ὁ θεός).[91] This statement mirrors 5.5b, clarifying that ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ poured into human hearts by the Spirit can only be understood "from the perspective of Jesus' passion."[92] Jesus' death is the particular, historical instantiation of God's love. Thus Nygren: "Nowhere else is there a revelation of God's love like Christ's death on the cross. There, and there alone, we learn to know the deepest meaning of God's love."[93] Since God's love is concretely demonstrated in Christ's death—against all human logic—for the ungodly, it is clear that ἡ ἐλπὶς οὐ καταισχύνει.

Thus, 5.6–8 sets forth the objects of God's actions in Christ as ἀσθενής, ἀσεβής, and ἁμαρτωλός, who thus receive the Christ-gift as nothing but

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and those actions that are done out of their proper time are blameworthy. It is only right to love those who are worthy to attract love (χρὴ μέντοι φιλεῖν τοὺς ἄξια φιλίας δρῶντας), and no wicked people truly have friends. Accordingly, to die for the unworthy is not only nonsensical but also morally reprehensible, contrary to the commandment.

88 A. Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (London: Bloomsbury, 1958), 201. Cf. also A.J. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 211: "Christ's dying for the weak and ungodly demonstrates a love that surpasses normal human experience. God's love in Christ is not based on the worthiness of the object loved, but on the character of the one who loves. It is God's nature so to love." Thesis 28 of Luther's Heidelberg Disputation seems to stand behind Hultgren's statement (appropriately so): "The love of God does not find, but creates, that which is pleasing to it. The love of man comes into being through that which is pleasing to it."

89 F. Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (ed. T.W. Chambers; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977), 194.

90 L.E. Keck, *Romans* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 139.

91 That God's love is proved in Christ's death speaks to "a mysterious fusion of agency between Father and Son." R.B. Hays, "The Story of God's Son: The Identity of Jesus in the Letters of Paul," in *Seeking the Identity of Jesus: A Pilgrimage* (ed. B.R. Gaventa and R.B. Hays; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 186. For a discussion of Paul's "for us" statements, see Breytenbach, *Grace*, 59–79.

92 Käsemann, *Romans*, 138.

93 Nygren, *Romans*, 200.

unfitting recipients. As Barth states, "In the death of Christ God has intervened on our behalf in the 'nevertheless' of His free grace."[94] Barth's "nevertheless" captures the incongruity of the Christ-gift, just like Paul's "but now" (3.21). The gift is without pre-condition since the recipients have no worth of which to speak; Paul's argument precludes worth or fit. "Here is the power of God's grace: that Christ did not die for the righteous, for the morally acceptable, for the noble of heart . . ."[95]

3.2.3 Romans 5.5: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Gift-Giving

But how do these unworthy recipients receive the gift? What is interesting here is that God's love in the Christ-gift is poured out *through* the Holy Spirit (διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου) rather than the Holy Spirit being poured out as a result of the event. Indeed, the gift of the Spirit (πνεύματος ἁγίου τοῦ δοθέντος ἡμῖν) is inseparable from the Christ-gift because the Spirit is what appropriates the past event as a present gift. The gift of the Spirit has an integral role in the gift-event of salvation.

For Käsemann, ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ could not be "God's act of love" because "the verb speaks against this."[96] That is, the perfect tense of ἐκχέω precludes defining God's love as a one-time act, the death of Christ; an aorist verb would have been used for this (5.6, 8). But as Dunn states, "The present tense [of συνίστημι] complements the perfect of v 5 and probably reflects the perspective of the preacher who referred back to the death of Christ as a timeless proof of God's love."[97] As Paul explains in Gal 3.1–5, the "hearing of faith"[98] effects the receipt of the Spirit from "the One who supplies to you the Spirit."[99] It is thus only

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94 K. Barth, *Christ and Adam: Man and Humanity in Romans 5* (trans. T.A. Smail; Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 2.

95 J.L. Martyn, "From Paul to Flannery O'Connor with the Power of Grace," in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (London: T&T Clark, 1997), 288. Cf. Harrison, *Grace*, 225 for how the "unworthiness of those who receive the benefits of Christ's death . . . poses a problem for traditional benefaction ideology."

96 Käsemann, *Romans*, 135.

97 Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 256. For general hesitancy on reading too much into the tense-forms of the verbs here, see S.E. Porter, "Paul's Concept of Reconciliation, Twice More," in *Paul and His Theology* (ed. S.E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 147.

98 On this phrase, see esp. S.K. Williams, "The Hearing of Faith: ΑΚΟΗ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ in Galatians 3," *NTS* 35 (1989): 82–93.

99 One common argument against the objective-genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ is that it makes faith a condition for God's acting (e.g. Martyn, *Theological Issues*, 151). Instead, Christ's faith is prior to and causative of human faith. Though I am unsure to whom this critique applies, this argument is unnecessary. With the objective genitive,

through proclamation that one receives the Spirit and thus believes—and so is justified.[100] If for Philo the ears are untrustworthy and no credit is due to hearing,[101] for Paul it is only through hearing proclamation that one begins in the Spirit and so receives the gift.

How does the Spirit make this gift present? Jewett gives a straightforward interpretation: "God's love is conveyed 'through the Holy Spirit given to us,' whereby the object of the preposition διά should be understood as the agent enabling this communication."[102] However, Wolter has opposed this line of interpretation, arguing that an understanding of διά as "instrumental oder kausal" leaves the Spirit's role unclear: it would be both "verliehenes Objekt" and "aktives, fast schon personal aufzufassendes vermittelndes Subjekt."[103] The Spirit cannot be both gift given and Giver. Rather, "διά can designate . . . the perceptible form in which the Spirit comes to expression."[104] The Spirit becomes "eine substanzhafte Hypostase" of God's love, its "empirisch erfahrbare Gestalt."[105]

The problem with this view is that it depends on non-Pauline texts while stumbling on Romans 5.5.[106] Paul does not speak of a "perceptible form" of divine love but the cross as the *demonstration* of God's love. Wolter's argument both overloads διά and also downgrades the Spirit's role in the economy of salvation.[107] As Wolter notes, Paul seems to make the Holy Spirit both "Geber"

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faith does not become a condition for God's acting but rather is still the consequence of God's act, specifically the proclamation of that act (cf. Gal 3.1–5; Rom 10.17) which comes as a gift in the Holy Spirit. Cf. G. Friedrich, "Glaube und Verkündigung bei Paulus," in *Glaube im Neuen Testament* (ed. F. Hahn and H. Klein; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1982), 109–10.

100 See further next chapter.

101 Cf. *Spec.* 4.137.

102 Jewett, *Romans*, 357.

103 M. Wolter, *Rechtfertigung und zukünftiges Heil: Untersuchungen zu Röm 5, 1–11* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1978), 161.

104 Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 253.

105 Wolter, *Rechtfertigung*, 166.

106 Cf. C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (2nd ed.; London: A&C Black, 1991), 105.

107 Engberg-Pedersen, "Gift-Giving and Friendship," 35 argues that the Spirit "has no role to play . . . in 5:1–11." For Engberg-Pedersen, the Spirit is a "supernumerary idea" mentioned solely in anticipation of chapter 8 (38). By reading backwards, Engberg-Pedersen believes ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ also refers to human love for God. However, the Spirit *is* present in 5.5 and plays a role that fits coherently with Paul's other statements about the Spirit, so I am reluctant both to downplay its significance and to let chapter 8 overturn the straightforward subjective genitive in 5.5.

and "Gabe": and removing either of those aspects distorts Paul's view of the Spirit. Elsewhere Paul explains that only ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ can someone proclaim Κύριος Ἰησοῦς (1 Cor 12.3); in 2 Cor 4.13 Paul speaks of the πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως "in and with which faith comes,"[108] as Paul both brought the gospel to the Thessalonians ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ and they received it μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος ἁγίου (1 Thess 1.5–6).[109] Faith comes from hearing the word (Rom 10.17; Gal 3.2) and the word is proclaimed and received in the Spirit. Romans 5.5 is part-and-parcel of this thought.[110] The gift is given "while we were still sinners," that is, "apart from our capacity to receive it,"[111] and therefore it is only through the gift of the Spirit that this love is received. Furthermore, "we received . . . the Spirit that comes from God, so that we might know the gifts God has given us" (ἐλάβομεν . . . τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα εἰδῶμεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν; 1 Cor 2.12).[112] God through the Spirit "instructs" about the salvation received in Christ, as God "has revealed to us through the Holy Spirit" the mystery of Christ crucified (1 Cor 2.10). No one knows "the things of God, except the Spirit of God," and therefore God gives the Spirit to make intelligible, and effective, the Christ-gift. Consequently, the love of God in which believers have eschatological hope is received "through the Holy Spirit," which God gives as a "down payment" (θεός, ὁ δοὺς ἡμῖν τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος; 2 Cor 5.5; cf. Rom 8.9–17). The Spirit is the agent through which the Christ-gift, that is, God's love, is received by the human.[113]

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108 Cf. V.P. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (New Haven: YUP, 2005), 258.

109 Cf. also 1 Cor 12.9; 2.4–5.

110 Cf. F. Watson, "The Triune Divine Identity: Reflections on Pauline God-Language, in Disagreement with J.D.G. Dunn," *JSNT* 80 (2000): 122: "The gift of the Spirit is not an additional divine action that can be contrasted with the death and resurrection of Jesus, in that the latter can only be believed whereas the former is directly experienced; it is rather the way in which the single divine action is brought to its *telos*, which is our own participation in the death that Jesus died to sin and the life he lives to God (cf. Rom. 6.10)."

111 Barth, *Romans*, 162.

112 Cf. G.D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 103.

113 K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics, IV/2* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958), 329: "The love of God which is in Christ and directed to them is one event as it is gathered together in the 'by the Holy Ghost.' " Cf. C.K. Rowe, "The Trinity in the Letters of St Paul and Hebrews," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity* (ed. G. Emery and M. Levering; Oxford: OUP, 2011), 51 on the "Trinitarian pattern of speech" employed in Romans 5. Also, G.D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 589. On these grounds, Didymus the Blind (*On the Holy Spirit*, 168; cf. 166–69) speaks of a "single reception of the Trinity."

To paraphrase the benediction of 2 Corinthians 13.13: "The gift of the Lord Jesus Christ [which is] the love of God [received through] the participation of the Holy Spirit." As an historical event, the Christ-gift precedes the giving of the Spirit (e.g. Gal 3.13–14), but the Spirit appropriates the Christ-gift for the individual through faith so that they might "stand in this grace."

3.2.3 Conclusion

This investigation of Romans 5.1–11 both confirms the interpretation of 3.21–26 while also nuancing Paul's understanding of gift-giving. The Christ-event is the historical instantiation of God's love incongruously given to unworthy humans through the reception of the gift of the Spirit. Accordingly, this passage provides an important foundation for Romans 5.12–21, where Paul's gift-language is used with the most frequency but perhaps the least explication.

3.3 *Romans 5.12–21: The Macro-Structure of Paul's Theology*

In Romans 5.12–21, Paul maps human existence around two poles: every person is determined by either Adam's sin, leading to death, or Christ's death, giving righteousness and life. Here, more than elsewhere, Paul reflects on the answer to sin through the concept of gift. While Paul's use of gift-terms may appear to be mere linguistic excess and rhetorical wordplay, I will argue that Paul employs a matrix of gift-language with varied yet interdependent meanings to describe how God saves humanity in the Christ-event.[114] Here again, God's giving is Christological, incongruous to its recipients, and therefore drastically excessive.

3.3.1 5.12–14: The Problem

The basic logic of 5.12–13 is Adam introduced sin, and therefore death, to the κόσμος; every individual is caught in Adam's problem and can expect Adam's fate.[115] As we saw in chapter 2, the sin of Philo's Adam (with Eve) also had detrimental consequences: "the everlasting fountains of God's gifts have been held back" so that they might not be received by the unworthy.[116] Essentially, Adam creates the *possibility* of unworthiness; but this is not, as it is for Paul, an

114 As J.R.D. Kirk, "Reconsidering 'Dikaiōma' in Romans 5:16," *JBL* 126 (2007): 789 notes, the "unbalanced" and "unpredictable" contrasts in 5.15–17 should show that the probability lies in Paul's choosing words for particular purposes.

115 F.W. Danker, "Romans v.12. Sin Under Law," *NTS* 14 (1968): 427 points out that Adam is not a "new item" but a "summary of Paul's earlier indictment of all humanity."

116 *Opif.* 168.

inevitability.[117] Furthermore, Paul asserts that sin existed before the Law, showing sin to be "deeper and more pervasive, infecting even those who conform to the Torah."[118] Before the Law God did not charge the sins committed against the individual.[119] For Philo, nothing comes "before" the Law, because the Law of Nature immutably orders the world itself. Paul's statement contradicts Philo's cosmology. Yet for Paul, although God did not make sinners accountable before the Law, the sin-death relationship still held true: death reigned (ἐβασίλευσεν ὁ θάνατος). Thus, for Paul and Philo not only is the Adamic problem different, but Paul does not view the Law as the solution.

In 5.14 Paul sets Adam and Christ into the relationship that will structure the argument: Adam is a "type of the one to come" (τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος). The basis for the positive relationship between Adam and Christ is that both are fate-defining for humanity: Adam to death, Christ to life.

3.3.2 5.15–17: Adam and Christ, Gift and Trespass

In 5.15–17 Paul explores Adam and Christ's relationship, asserting a positive formal correspondence and a limitless material distinction.[120] Almost all interpreters construe 5.15a and 16a as contrastive declarative statements: "But the gift is not like the trespass." However, Caragounis has argued for viewing them as rhetorical questions: "But is the gift not like the trespass?"[121] The implied positive answer allows 15–17 to follow logically from 14c and the Adam-Christ relationship. In 5.15–17 Paul thus develops the formal, typological relationship between Adam and Christ as two figures with different effects. As Caragounis notes, Paul could have constructed a simple contrast more straightforwardly;[122] likewise, the a minori ad maius arguments (πολλῷ μᾶλλον) show that formal similarity is in view. Under the traditional reading, 5.15–19 is repetitious, even by Paul's standards; by contrast, the positive correspondence in 5.15–17 provides 5.18–19 with something to conclude. 5.15–17 is thus an inherently contrastive comparison.

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117 Cf. Westerholm, "Anthropological 'Pessimism'," 96–98.

118 Jewett, *Romans*, 377. By contrast, see J.C. Poirier, "Romans 5:13–14 and the Universality of Law," *NovT* 38 (1996): 344–58.

119 Cf. O. Hofius, "The Adam-Christ Antithesis and the Law: Reflections on Romans 5:12–21," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law* (ed. J.D.G. Dunn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 194–96.

120 Cf. Wright, *Romans*, 528.

121 C.C. Caragounis, "Romans 5.15–16 in the Context of 5.15–21: Contrast or Comparison?," *NTS* 31 (1985): 143. Cf. also S.E. Porter, "The Argument of Romans 5: Can a Rhetorical Question Make a Difference?," *JBL* 110 (1991): 673–74.

122 Caragounis, "Romans 5.15–16," 144.

3.3.2.1 *5.15*

"But is the gift (χάρισμα) not like the trespass (παράπτωμα)?" The implied answer is "Yes"—Adam is the τύπος of Christ. Most commentators agree that παράπτωμα, like ἁμαρτία,[123] designates "what Adam did."[124] Paul contrasts Adam's παράπτωμα with Christ's χάρισμα, although one might expect ὑπακοή or δικαίωμα to parallel Adam's disobedience with Christ's obedience (cf. 5.18–19).[125] As Fee states, "Here is certain evidence that [χάρισμα] does not primarily mean 'gift of the Spirit.'"[126] This is amplified by the fact that in non-Christian usage, χάρισμα had no special meaning beyond "gift."[127]

5.15a is best taken as a balanced comparison:[128] as παράπτωμα refers to Adam's sin, so χάρισμα refers to Christ's act, his self-giving (cf. 5.19).[129] Similarly, in 5.18 δικαίωμα contrasts παράπτωμα, and δικαίωμα there means "righteous act," with its counterpart ὑπακοή in 19.[130] Accordingly, δικαίωμα can help interpret χάρισμα, as a different way of saying the same thing.[131] Christ's righteous act, obediently dying on the cross—his δικαίωμα and ὑπακοή—is his χάρισμα, his gift.[132] The terms are mutually interpretive, showing Christ to be

123 Cf. e.g. Jewett, *Romans*, 379; Hultgren, *Romans*, 226–227; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 279.

124 J.A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 418.

125 Cf. R.H. Gundry, "A Breaking of Expectations: The Rhetoric of Surprise in Paul's Letter to the Romans," in *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (ed. S.K. Soderlund and N.T. Wright; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 257.

126 Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 498. *Pace* Jewett, *Romans*, 380.

127 Cf. e.g. *Leg*. 3.78. Cf. Harrison, *Grace*, 279–80: "It is likely . . . that Paul borrowed χάρισμα from contemporary colloquial language."

128 Cf. D.J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 335.

129 Cf. O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer* (14th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 189: χάρισμα "bezeichnet hier den konkreten Erweis der Gnade und Güte Gottes." With R.H. Bell, "Rom 5.18–19 and Universal Salvation," *NTS* 48 (2002): 422, it is difficult to see here a reference to Christ's obedient life or obedience to the law. *Contra* Cranfield, *Romans*, 289 and H. Lietzmann, *An die Römer* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1971), 64, respectively.

130 Cf. Käsemann, *Romans*, 156.

131 Cf. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 296–97.

132 Χάρισμα thus accentuates a particular aspect of God's gift. Cf. J. Cambier, "Péchés des hommes et péché d'Adam en Rom v.12," *NTS* 11 (1964): 218: "L'action du Christ est exprimée par un mot central dans notre pericope: χάρις (v. 15 (deux fois), 17, 21), et ses synonymes et precisions: χάρισμα (v. 15, 16), δικαίωμα (16, 18), ὑπακοή (19); elle exprime le don du Père apporté par Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ."

"a concrete enactment of grace."[133] The gift is like the trespass: both speak of what the progenitors have done.

5.15b explains the effects of 15a. By Adam's παράπτωμα the many have died; yet, "if by one man's trespass the many died, then how much more did the grace of God (ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ) *and* the gift in grace by the one man Jesus Christ (ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) abound (ἐπερίσσευσεν) unto the many." Two questions arise here.

First, are ἡ χάρις and ἡ δωρεά the same gift or two gifts?[134] Käsemann argues that the phrase is a hendiadys: "gracious gift of God."[135] For this interpretation, however, one would expect anarthrous nouns. Instead, ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ is God's gift of Christ,[136] and ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι is the gift of righteousness in Christ's self-giving. As Sanday and Headlam point out, "ἡ δωρεά is defined more fully below (ver. 17) as ἡ δωρεὰ τῆς δικαιοσύνης . . ."[137] The relation between ἡ δωρεὰ and ἐν χάριτι reinforces this interpretation. As Hofius notes, ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι either means "the gift that consists of the grace . . . of the one man" or "the gift that is granted through the grace of the one man."[138] With Hofius, I think the former is grammatically improbable. Rather, ἐν χάριτι denotes the Christ-gift as the source and location of the gift of righteousness. That is, ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ parallels ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ, because χάρις is both God's

133 Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 279; cf. Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 498; B. Byrne, *Romans* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 179.

134 Nonspecific answers are typical; cf. e.g. Moo, *Romans*, 335 n.96 and Jewett, *Romans*, 381.

135 Käsemann, *Romans*, 153. An interesting variation is found in Luther's 1515–1516 Romans commentary: "In verse 15 the Apostle connects the 'grace of God' with the 'gift of grace' as though they were distinct from each other. He does this to stress the fact that we do not receive the grace of God by merit, but as a free gift which the Father has given to Christ . . . But really the 'grace of God' and the 'gift by grace' are one and the same thing, namely, the righteousness which God bestows upon us by grace through Christ." On the development of Luther's understanding of the "grace of God" and the "gift of grace," see R. Schäfer, "Melanchthon's Interpretation of Romans 5.15: His Departure from the Augustinian Concept of Grace Compared to Luther's," in *Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560) and the Commentary* (ed. T.J. Wengert and M.P. Graham; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 79–105; S. Peura, "Christ as Favor and Gift (donum): The Challenge of Luther's Understanding of Justification," in *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (ed. C.E. Braaten and R.W. Jenson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 42–69; S.K. Turnbull, "Grace and Gift in Luther and Paul," *W&W* 24 (2004): 305–14.

136 Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 381.

137 W. Sanday and A.C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1895), 140.

138 Hofius, "Adam-Christ Antithesis," 188.

gift and Christ's self-gift.[139] The result of χάρις is δικαιοσύνη, which is in the Christ-event (cf. 3.24; 1 Cor 1.30).[140]

Second, what does it mean for a gift to "abound"? Jewett claims περισσεύω harks back to the "idea that the future age would reinstate the plenitude of paradise," that "with the dawn of the new age, paradisal plenitude was flowing out into the world."[141] Philo, however, could describe God's excessive beneficence without this implication.[142] The difference is that for Philo abounding implies an abundance of *gifts*, where for Paul a singular *gift* abounds.[143] As Byrne puts it, "Behind the act of Christ stood the overflowing power and generosity of the Creator."[144] Excess is primarily a result of incongruity, a lack of fit between Giver, gift, and recipient; the gift abounds because a righteous God gives to sinful humanity what it does not deserve (cf. 6.1).[145] Ideas about eschatological fullness may lie in the background of this text, but they are unnecessary to explain the superfluity of grace.[146]

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139 Cf. Hofius, "Adam-Christ Antithesis," 188. Thus, U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Vol. 1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978), 327: "Christus als Ursprung der Gerechtigkeit aller Menschen ist also gerade nicht Repräsentant der Menschen vor Gott, wie es Adam ist—in dem Sinne, dass er repräsentiert, was sie tun und sind—sondern Repräsentant Gottes vor den Menschen."

140 Engberg-Pedersen, "Gift-Giving and Friendship," 26: "the content of the gift was at two connected, but distinguishable levels. Concretely, it was the Christ event, but with regard to God's purpose of this event, it was also its ultimate outcome: justification and life for human beings." Similarly, Käsemann, *Romans*, 153.

141 Jewett, *Romans*, 381. Cf. Theobald, *Gnade*, 94–96.

142 See, e.g., *Leg*. 1.34; 3.163.

143 Wobbe, *Charis-Gedanke*, 41 claims that Paul uses excess-terms to avoid using χάριτες. Likewise Harrison, *Grace*, 285 argues that Paul's monotheism is the "fundamental explanation"—χάριτες "would have been all too easily confused with the Greek goddesses." Harrison knows that Philo used the plural and was a monotheist, but he still finds this answer sufficient. Furthermore, it is "also likely" that the "singular χάρις" is used to emphasize the "act of God in Christ." It seems to me that Paul uses the singular because he has one χάρις in mind.

144 Byrne, *Romans*, 179. Cf. Hofius, "Adam-Christ Antithesis," 180.

145 Cf. Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 78: "This is the root of the famous Pauline theme concerning the superabundance of grace . . . Evental grace governs a multiplicity in excess of itself, one that is indescribable, superabundant . . . with respect to the fixed distributions of the law."

146 Likewise, I am not convinced that the reign of Augustus stands behind the text; Harrison, *Grace*, 227–34. However, Harrison's discussion is interesting; e.g., Augustus was merciful to those who "were politically astute enough to sue for peace after the battle of Actium." By contrast, Christ reconciled *enemies*.

3.3.2.2 *5.16*

Paul asks another question: "And is the gift (τὸ δώρημα) not like what happened by the one man's sinning (δι᾽ ἑνὸς ἁμαρτήσαντος)?" The result of actions committed is emphasized again. Insofar as 16b explicates 16a, δώρημα is interpreted as the χάρισμα that effects δικαίωμα. The relationship between 16a-b emphasizes the expected result of Adam's sin and the unexpected answer to humanity's sinfulness, and therefore the shape of δώρημα as indicating a gift given without precondition. Whereas 15b and 17 are structured by πολλῷ μᾶλλον, 16b is structured by an adversative δέ. The judgment (κρίμα) that led from the one man (ἐξ ἑνός) results in condemnation (εἰς κατάκριμα). Yet, counter-intuitively, the χάρισμα comes from many trespasses (ἐκ πολλῶν παραπτωμάτων) and results in a righteous decree (εἰς δικαίωμα).[147] Both κρίμα and χάρισμα come from God, but the former is a fitting response to sin and the latter an incongruous response to manifold sinning.[148] The use of ἐκ conveys that "the gracious gift of God's righteousness came not just in answer to our many transgressions, but—strikingly and mysteriously—through them, by way of them, out of them."[149] The Christ-gift is the divine response to human sinfulness as it takes place historically amidst that sinning.

Consequently, δώρημα—and its explication in 16b—stresses the gift's incongruity to its sinful recipients. What resulted δι᾽ ἑνὸς ἁμαρτήσαντος is rigidly enforced and deserved; the δώρημα, however, is an unwarranted gift given without thought for the recipients' worthiness—indeed, despite unworthiness.[150]

3.3.3.3 *5.17*

The protasis of 17 needs little comment, as it parallels 15a and restates verses 12–14. The apodosis of 17 reworks 15b, with the verb περισσεύω nominalized and

147 Most commentators understand δικαίωμα as justification; e.g. Barrett, *Romans*, 115; Käsemann, *Romans*, 154; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 419; Moo, *Romans*, 338; Hultgren, *Romans*, 227. They argue that δικαίωμα was used for homoioteleuton and concede that it has different meanings in 5.16, 18. Jewett, *Romans*, 382 argues that the semantic range of the term implies a translation such as "righteous decree." As Hultgren notes, however, this is not very different from justification. Kirk, "Reconsidering," 787 has argued for viewing δικαίωμα as reparation: "an action performed by a convicted person that satisfies the court and thus justifies the defendant." Yet would χάρισμα as Christ's self-giving not be that act?

148 Cf. Barth, *Romans*, 179.

149 Gundry, "Breaking of Expectations," 259.

150 As Cranfield, *Romans*, 286 states, "That one single misdeed should be answered by judgment, this is perfectly understandable: that the accumulated sins and guilt of all the ages should be answered by God's free gift, this is the miracle of miracles, utterly beyond human comprehension."

the same gift language retained. The presence of the repeated article points towards two gifts again; furthermore, the parallelism and the repeated terminology justify interpreting the language similarly. Χάρις is again the gift of Christ, and ἡ δωρεά is explicitly δικαιοσύνη, which confirms the interpretation of 15b.[151] Thus, as in 3.24 and 5.15, the gift of righteousness is a result of the Christ-event. As a divine gift, those who receive (οἱ λαμβάνοντες)[152] do so in abundance, the effect of which is the triumph of righteousness and life over sin and death.[153] From this sense of abundance, Paul concludes in 5.18–19 that as all are condemned and made sinners in Adam, in Christ all are justified.

3.3.4 5.20–21: The Superabundance and Reign of the Gift

In 5.20 Paul reintroduces the Law, which "slipped in" (παρεισῆλθεν) so that the trespass might increase. If Adam introduced sin, the Law makes sin worse. As Käsemann states, 5.21 "shows that the law has no significance for the antithesis of Adam and Christ but only for the world of Adam."[154] For Philo, Moses in his Law guides humans to virtue, so they are able to live virtuously.[155] But for Paul, knowledge of sin comes through the Law (3.20), which allows sin to work death in the individual through the Law (7.5, 8–13). Surprisingly, Paul does not specify that the Law caused sin to increase *in Israel*. Here, at least, Paul narrates history without referencing Israel, as it was in the Adamic κόσμος "where sin increased" (οὗ ἐπλεόνασεν ἡ ἁμαρτία).[156] Yet οὗ defines more importantly the location not of sin's increase but of grace's superabounding (ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις). The aorist verb form of ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν—and the whole train of thought—points to a single event in history, such that the superabounding gift is the Christ-event. Distinct from Philo, grace for Paul does not superabound in

151 As N.T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 98 states, "Righteousness is not an object, a substance or a gas which can be passed across the courtroom." This claim, however, cannot mitigate the fact that Paul speaks about righteousness as a gift received; Paul "could scarcely signal more clearly the exceptional nature of *this* dikaiosness." Cf. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 274.

152 *Pace* R. Bultmann, "Adam und Christus nach Römer 5," in *Exegetica: Aufsätze zur Erforschung des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1967), 437, οἱ λαμβάνοντες does not limit the range of "all." Cf. W. Grundmann, "Die Übermacht der Gnade: Eine Studie zur Theologie des Paulus," *NovT* 2 (1958): 50–72 and esp. Bell, "Universal Salvation."

153 On this theme, see H. Roose, "Sharing in Christ's Rule: Tracing a Debate in Earliest Christianity," *JSNT* 27 (2004): 140–41.

154 Käsemann, *Romans*, 158.

155 Cf. *Mos*. 2.51.

156 So Wilckens, *Römer*, 329. But cf. Hofius, "Adam-Christ Antithesis," 203–04.

creation or in the giving of the Law; the gracious plenitude happens precisely and exclusively in Jesus.[157] Adam's sin, humanity's participation in it, and the Law's intensification of sinning create the sphere in which God's grace erupts. As in 3.21–26, the gift comes to "all" who sinned and are therefore justified "as a gift" apart from the Law.

Verse 21 concludes: "so that just as sin reigned in death (ἐβασίλευσεν ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ), so also grace might reign through righteousness (ἡ χάρις βασιλεύσῃ διὰ δικαιοσύνης) for eternal life through Jesus Christ (διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) our Lord." Sin's reign parallels death's reign (v. 13), just as the sting of sin is death (1 Cor 15.56); yet God's gift discontinues the reign of sin, as in the Christ-event grace and life triumphed over death, thus establishing the reign of grace. Grace reigns "through righteousness," the gift given to sinners in the Christ-event (cf. 3.24).

3.3.5 Conclusion

In Romans 5.12–21, Paul paints the cosmological drama with only its most important actors. Adam's act polluted the cosmos with sin and death, which Moses' Law aggravated; by contrast, Christ's act results in righteousness and life for sinners. Paul conceptualizes his soteriology on this macro level as gift, and I have argued that Paul's gift terminology here stresses three aspects of divine grace.

First, the gift is Christological. Paul's gift-terminology here never refers to anything other than the Christ-gift and the gift of righteousness in Christ. Second, the gift is incongruous to its unworthy recipients. Paul makes this clear in his paradoxical assertion that Christ's death came as a gift ἐκ πολλῶν παραπτωμάτων. As humanity is marked by Adam, the gift is always incongruous; the only place for the gift to be given, and the site in which the gift is worked out, is where sin reigns. Third, the gift is excessive: it is an extravagant gift that lacks any fit with the recipient.

But situated between 3.21–26 and 5.1–21 is Abraham: does a Christological understanding of unfitting grace hold here?

3.4 *Rom 4.1–25: Abraham's Faith and the Christ-Gift*

In Romans 4, there are two reasons for thinking χάρις should not be defined as unfitting grace vis-à-vis the Christ-event: Abraham lived hundreds of years

157 J.M. Bassler, "Grace: Probing the Limits," *Interp* 57 (2003): 26 argues this sense of grace abounding incongruously is not "incomprehensible within the framework of Jewish thought." But excessive incongruity would be unfathomable to Philo, as it would question the rationality of both the created order and God's justice.

before Christ, and 4.1–23 is ostensibly devoid of references to Christ. Yet, the phrase κατὰ χάριν defines both Abraham's justification (4.3–5) and the way God gave the promise to Abraham (4.16), which Paul sees fulfilled in Christ. The notion of justification and reception of the promise κατὰ χάριν—as an unfitting gift—rather than κατὰ ὀφείλημα and διὰ νόμου is comprehensible only as a reading of Abraham's story after Christ. Accordingly, the Christ-event becomes a retroactive hermeneutic of incongruity.[158] Abraham is justified and his family is constituted by Jews and Gentiles because God's promise has always been incongruous to its recipients and directed towards its fulfillment in Christ.

3.4.1 The Justification of Abraham

For Paul, Abraham is set in a context of godlessness and is himself ungodly.[159] Paul does not describe Abraham's godless context like Philo does,[160] but Paul sees all people on equal ground as sinners and thus objects of God's judgment; and Abraham cannot be excluded.[161] Indeed, the logic of the passage demands he not be: "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him for righteousness" (Gen 15.6; Rom 4.3). The one who is reckoned righteous is the person whose faith is in "the one who justifies the ungodly" (ἐπὶ τὸν δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἀσεβῆ; 4.5). Since Abraham's faith is in this God who justifies the ungodly, the reckoning of righteousness to Abraham is the justification of one such ungodly person. Paul's use of LXX Psalm 31.1 clarifies this point.[162] Paul links

158 I borrow and adapt from Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 57. Barclay, "Grace and Agency," 149 speaks of Christ as the "particular moment when divine grace changes the history of the world, throwing all else, before and after, into a different light."

159 So, B. Schliesser, *Abraham's Faith in Romans 4* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 345: "Nowhere does Scripture call Abraham (anything like) 'ungodly,' yet it is impossible *not* to deduce from the apostle's line of thought that he *de facto* does so." Impossible, yes; however, N.T. Wright, "Paul and the Patriarch: The Role of Abraham in Romans 4," *JSNT* 35 (2013): 223 argues that ἀσεβῆ is a collective noun for non-Jews. Cf. S.J. Gathercole, "Justified by Faith, Justified by His Blood: The Evidence of Romans 3:21–4:25," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism. II. The Paradoxes of Paul* (ed. D.A. Carson, P.T. O'Brien, and M.A. Seifrid; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 156 on the strangeness of understanding Abraham as ungodly in a Jewish context.

160 Cf. e.g. *Virt*. 212–13.

161 Cf. also the lexical links between Rom 1 and 4; E. Adams, "Abraham's Faith and Gentile Disobedience: Textual Links Between Romans 1 and 4," *JSNT* 19 (1997): 48–54; McFarland, "Whose Abraham, Which Promise?," 115–20.

162 Cf. O. Hofius, "'Rechtfertigung des Gottlosen' als Thema biblischer Theologie," in *Paulusstudien* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 130 n. 46: "Das eologi/sqh von Gen 15,6, und das logi/shtai von Ps 31,2 LXX erläutern sich gegenseitig." Schliesser, *Abraham's Faith*, 314: "David witnesses for God's dealing with Abraham."

verse 5 to 6 with καθάπερ, signaling that David's testimony about God's non-reckoning of sin interprets Abraham's justification. David declares that the person whom God justifies apart from works (Abraham; 4.2) is blessed, for God has forgiven their lawless acts, covered their sins, and further, not reckoned sin.[163] In this context, justification is—or includes—divine acquittal of the ungodly object.[164] Abraham stands before God without works or worth, as an ungodly human whom God pardons because of his faith.[165]

But, Philo might ask, how can Abraham be without works or worth? For Philo Abraham's belief in God—his "acquiring faith" (κτησάμενος πίστιν)—is the culmination of his development in virtue.[166] Abraham "chooses faith in God as a reward" (ἆθλον).[167] Accordingly, the God who loves virtue (φιλάρετος) honors those who are godly (τοὺς εὐσεβείας). That is, God reckons Abraham righteous because his faith (virtue) corresponds to the reward; although God's beneficence is always condescension to human weakness, Philo views Abraham as a fitting recipient of grace. Abraham thus becomes the "standard of nobility for all proselytes" (οὗτος ἅπασιν ἐπηλύταις εὐγενείας ἐστὶ κανών);[168] Abraham broke free from ungodliness in Chaldea, and Abraham's descendants can be virtuous if they live virtuously like Abraham. Accordingly, any human—Jew or Gentile—can be virtuous and therefore rewarded by God. As we have seen, worth is the condition—not cause—of divine giving, and one becomes worthy by living virtuously. Grace cannot be split from works because Abraham's belief is his development in virtue.

Accordingly, Paul's line of thought—"For if Abraham was justified by works, he has a boast, but not with God" (4.2)—would strike Philo as odd for two

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163 Cf. Gathercole, "Justified by Faith," 158–59. As A.A. Das, "Paul and Works of Obedience in Second Temple Judaism: Romans 4:4–5 as a 'New Perspective' Case Study," *CBQ* 71 (2009): 806–07 notes, ἀνομία and ἁμαρτωλός cannot be restricted to Gentiles.

164 Cf. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 308; Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting?*, 247; Schliesser, *Abraham's Faith*, 314–15.

165 As Bultmann, *New Testament*, 282 states, "The paradox in 'grace' is that it is precisely the transgressor, the sinner, to whom it applies." Cf. Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 263: "... the transition between ungodliness and blessedness occurs through an act of forgiveness on the divine side and an act of faith on the human side." Also, Engberg-Pedersen, "Gift-Giving and Friendship," 29. Wright, "Role of Abraham," 217 claims that this interpretation can be summarized "by saying that Abraham is justified by faith because he believes in justification by faith (as opposed to the justification of the godly)." This is a non sequitur.

166 *Virt.* 216. Cf. McFarland, "Whose Abraham, Which Promise?," 111–14.

167 *Praem.* 27.

168 *Virt.* 219.

reasons. How can faith and works be split apart? Why is boasting in works excluded (3.27)? Does Paul not understand that faith is a virtue one develops, and that by "working" one can—must—still attribute all things to God? Does Paul believe that human good works are somehow distinct from God's causation?[169] Paul's argument makes sense only when justification is κατὰ χάριν, where grace is construed in light of the Christ-event.[170] Emphatically, Abraham was not justified by works so that he could boast; rather, he was justified by faith, as the "righteousness of faith" came before he was circumcised (4.10–11). In 4.3, Paul thus introduces a dichotomy to distinguish faith and works as well as obligation and gift vis-à-vis God's justification of the ungodly.

To the one who works (ἐργαζομένῳ) the reward (μισθός) is reckoned according to obligation, not grace (κατὰ ὀφείλημα, κατὰ χάριν). Since Abraham did not work (4.2) he is not rewarded according to obligation. In 4.5 Paul does not continue the antithesis straightforwardly; rather, Paul develops the antithesis in a peculiar way.[171] If one works, one has a reward according to obligation; but to the one who *does not work* but believes in the God who justifies the ungodly, righteousness is reckoned, with κατὰ χάριν implied. Thus, in 4.4 Paul develops his argument from Gen 15.6 by explicating the use of λογίζομαι with standard economic terms about a worker receiving fitting compensation.[172] Indeed, Paul constructs his argument such that working itself precludes the possibility of gift.[173] In 4.5, however, Paul speaks not only of the "the one who does not work" but also of "the one who believes" (ὁ πιστεύων), thus assimilating the economic within the theological. The μισθός drops from view, and faith is placed as the opposite of work as gift is the opposite of pay.[174] There is nothing

169 Cf. Das, "Paul and Works," 797: "when Paul speaks of works *in contrast* to grace, he has severed those works or 'works of the Law' from their gracious context in Second Temple Judaism. Paul reconceptualizes grace in terms of Christ . . . Paul's critique of ethnocentrism flows out of his christological convictions, convictions that led Paul to broader conclusions regarding the justifying inefficacy of works in general."

170 For Wright, "Role of Abraham," 216, all of 4.4–8 is "simply a secondary metaphor which Paul never employs in similar contexts elsewhere;" it "develops sideways" out of his primary argument and by happenstance "overlap[s] with one way of expounding an 'old perspective' view of justification" (233). It is telling that these verses sit uncomfortably with Wright's proposals, which require all of the key terms/concepts to be redefined.

171 For the implied logic, see Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 280 n. 45.

172 Jewett, *Romans*, 313.

173 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 77 calls this Paul's "polemic against the 'what is due.' "

174 Wright, "Role of Abraham," 215 argues that μισθός in 4.4 is picks up its use in Gen 15.1 and therefore refers to Abraham's promised "worldwide family." It is striking that Paul never

κατὰ χάριν for the one who works; the reward is for the one who works, while justification is a gift to those who believe.

Therefore, Paul argues in 4.2–5 not that Abraham simply did not work, but that Abraham did not work yet believed; the implied logic is that as Abraham did not work, righteousness by faith is reckoned not κατὰ ὀφείλημα but κατὰ χάριν. Abraham has no reason for boasting (καύχημα) before God, which would result from being justified by works as *compensation*, because he has been justified by faith as *gift*.[175] Thus, ἔργα and ἐργάζομαι result in μισθὸς κατὰ ὀφείλημα; but obligation is a negation of gift, for Paul, as the gift upholds no systems of worth but comes to those without worth. πίστις and πιστεύω, however, result in justification κατὰ χάριν. Why Paul shies away from using μισθός again is not explicit, but it is likely because it would not fit his argument: the justification of the ungodly is not a reward for anything but is rather a gift, and Paul, unlike Philo, seems to distinguish gift and reward, because Paul defines a gift as something given to the unworthy, without preconditions.[176] It is not surprising that Paul elsewhere correlates "reward" with doing or working,[177] whereas he never correlates grace and reward. Thus, in contrast to Philo, for whom faith is the development of one's virtue, for Paul it is antithetical to work as the recognition of one's status of ungodly and need for justification. God is the one who justifies the ungodly, and to quote Moxnes, the "effect when this predication is added [to] the antithesis between 'work' and 'faith,' is that Paul put the emphasis not on 'faith' *per se*, but rather on *God*, in whom one believes."[178]

From the viewpoint of Philo, we can examine Romans 4 knowing that Paul has "stacked the deck" by defining justification over against work or any

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uses μισθός again after placing it on the negative side of his dichotomy. If Paul wanted to connect μισθός with any particularly significant referent, he did a poor job.

175 T. Engberg-Pedersen, "Gift-Giving and God's Charis: Bourdieu, Seneca and Paul in Romans 1–8," in *The Letter to the Romans* (ed. U. Schnelle; Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 101: "Paul is very keen on emphasizing the gift character of the Christ event, e.g. in 4,2–5, where he even brings out . . . the difference between God's act of gift and payment."

176 The relationship between gift and pay/reward, fitting and unfitting can be configured differently, a point which Paul and Philo make clear. For Paul a gift is unfitting and pay is fitting, and a gift is not pay; for Philo, both gift and pay are (typically) fitting, and gift can be pay. There is no inherent and necessary relationship between these concepts and definitions; Paul and Philo should be allowed to make their own configurations. More could be said on this topic, but the basic point here stands.

177 Cf. 1 Cor 3.8, 14; 9.17, 18.

178 H. Moxnes, *Theology in Conflict: Studies in Paul's Understanding of God in Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 110. Cf. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 68.

standards of worth:[179] Abraham is justified by faith, and God is the one who justifies the ungodly (ἀσεβής), precisely the one who is an undeserving recipient of the gift. This move—making grace antithetical to work, status, virtue, etc.—has its complement in Philo in the way he ultimately attributes all human working and virtue to God's causation.[180] But for Philo God works to create a fit between his gifts and the recipient to uphold the moral-cosmological order and to demonstrate himself a wise God; for Paul God does not create a fit that allows one to receive gifts. Rather, God gives despite the individual's incapacity, which can *then* produce some measure of fit (cf. e.g. Rom 6.15, 23). Accordingly, although Paul would place Philo on the "works" side of his antithesis, this is unfair to Philo for whom grace is not viewed through the lens of the Christ-event. Philo would see no antithesis: God accomplishes all good things, and faith is the "most certain of the virtues."[181] As Philo states, "faith in God (ἡ πρὸς θεὸν πίστις) is the only true and certain good" because "it is supported by the cause of all things."[182] Paul could be happy with most of that statement—but only on his terms. God justifies the ungodly Abraham by faith, not by work; Abraham is the recipient of a gift he does not deserve.

3.4.2 A Promise According to Grace

Paul defines the nature of Abraham's justification through his interpretation of Christ's death as the gift of God that justifies ungodly humans, of which Abraham is one. Re-reading Abraham's story this way, it would be incomprehensible to other Jewish readers, because Abraham's faith is specifically in the God who fulfills his promise to Abraham in the Christ-event (4.24–25). Paul's reading takes Gen 15.6 in connection with the promise of 17.5, which finds a pre-answer in the birth of Isaac read through and pointing to the death

179 Cf. F. Watson, "Constructing an Antithesis: Pauline and Other Jewish Perspectives on Divine and Human Agency," in *Divine and Human Agency*, 108 who argues that Paul's antithesis between salvation by faith or works (i.e. Hab 2.4 or Lev 18.5) makes space for others to "embody the soteriological logic that Paul strives to exclude." *Pace* M. Cranford, "Abraham in Romans 4: The Father of All Who Believe," *NTS* 41 (1995): 72–73 who argues that a distinction between faith and works could not be intended because it "would be completely unintelligible to a Jewish reader."

180 Wright, "Role of Abraham," 216: "the reason for the metaphor itself ('working' for a 'reward' which one is then 'owed') emerges not from an underlying implicit second-Temple Jewish soteriology of 'doing good works' to earn God's favour, an idea for which there is scant evidence." While Philo did not consider himself as doing good works to earn God's favor, he had God's favor because by his good works he was worthy to receive it (as a gift).

181 *Virt*. 216. Cf. *Her*. 91; *Abr*. 270.

182 *Abr*. 268.

and resurrection of Jesus, the event by which Abraham's family is ultimately established. As the New Perspective has rightly emphasized, a key feature of Romans 4 is that Abraham's family is composed of Jews and Gentiles. It is not incidental, however, that Paul moves from God's justification of an ungodly Abraham (4.1–8) then to the nature of the promise as being for Jews and Gentiles by faith (4.9–23): verse 9 is a conclusion (οὖν) from 1–8.[183] The unfitting gift establishes the inclusive family.

That God is the justifier of the ungodly is thus key: the promise is always received by faith. Faith itself is an act that points to God as subject,[184] where faith does not correspond with righteousness but is directed at a subject who reckons righteousness to the ungodly by faith as an unfitting gift. This faith exists because of God's promise, which both evokes faith and directs it towards what God will do and who God is. Accordingly, God is understood inseparably from the Christ-event in Romans 4. Abraham's faith is in the God who "gives life to the dead and calls those who do not exist into existence" (4.17), which signals that God is defined as the one who has acted in Christ.[185] Abraham's faith is in the God who fulfills his promise in the death and resurrection of Jesus (4.24–25).[186] The raising of Jesus, itself an act of creation, is prefigured by the act of creation that happens in the deadness of the aged Abraham and Sarah (4.19).[187] Thus, Abraham's justification is tied to God's act of creating anew in the resurrection of Jesus (4.25), which was "for our justification" (διὰ τὴν δικαίωσιν ἡμῶν), as Abraham's faith is not simply in God but in *God's promise* that Abraham would be the "father of many nations." The fulfillment of the promise in Christ, and its foreshadowing in the birth of Isaac from deadness

183 *Pace* Cranford, "Abraham," 81, Paul's point is not "somewhat obscured in the metaphors and citations of 4.4–8" but finally "made clear in v. 9."

184 K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics, 1/2* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), 331. Cf. also Engberg-Pedersen, "God's Charis," 103: Faith "expresses an attitude towards the *giver*, a recognition of him as giver through the acceptance of his gift."

185 On the way Paul's understanding of the Christ-event shapes his God-predicates, see esp. W. Hill, *Paul and the Triune Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), chap. 2.

186 Therefore, J.R.D. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 63: "Paul's reinterpretation of the Abraham narrative is not based on discovering a principle of grace but on discovering the grace of God in bringing about justification through the death and resurrection of Jesus."

187 Cf. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 281 n. 47: "Faith in God (who 'dikaiosifies the ungodly,' Rom 4:5) is the only possible recourse for sinners of whom dikaiosness (which they by definition do not have) is demanded, just as it was the only recourse for a couple whose childbearing years were long past but from whom a child nonetheless had to be born."

(4.17–20), allows Paul to recast Abraham's story as a story of death and resurrection. Thus, as Gathercole argues, "God's declaration of Abraham as righteous was not a descriptive word but the creative word of the God who calls 'nonentities' into being as entities."[188]

The correlate of Abraham's being justified while ungodly is that he was justified before he was circumcised, i.e., before he had done anything that could make him a fitting recipient (4.9–10). Circumcision played no factor in his being justified. Insofar as Abraham was justified while ungodly, he is the father of all who believe. Thus, in 4.13 Paul clarifies again that the promise to Abraham and his seed was not "through Law" (διὰ νόμου) but through the righteousness by faith. Indeed, the Law "produces wrath"—not worth—and accordingly the promise is by faith, so that it might be κατὰ χάριν (4.16). Grace in 4.16, like 4.5, retains the same shape: it is the antithesis to works and Law. κατὰ χάριν shows that those who receive the promise are the dead whom God makes alive and the inexistent whom God calls into being (4.17). From Abraham to Paul's present, the promise is received by faith, apart from Law and works; that is, it is always received as an unfitting gift, without works or circumcision making one worthy. Therefore, it is received by Jews and Gentiles. If one resorts to works or the Law, one is not justified on those grounds; rather, faith is emptied and the promise abolished (4.14). As Paul sees it, the only way God works is to justify those who have no worth—because no one is worthy—and to seek worth is to reject God's unfitting gift.

Accordingly, the Christ-event is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that constitutes the family of Abraham as both Jew and Gentile.[189] There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile in being sinful (3.22–23), and as a result of the Christ-event—the manifestation of God's righteousness—righteousness is universally available by faith in the God of the promise. For Philo, all could follow Abraham by living virtuously and thus be rewarded by God; for Paul, all are Abrahamic heirs of the promise through faith in the God who justifies the ungodly in the giving and raising of Jesus Christ.[190]

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188 Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting?*, 243.

189 Thus, Barth, *Romans*, 117: "If the revelation in Jesus be no more than a particular historical happening . . . its relative and incidental and particular character ought to become apparent when contrasted with an occurrence so remote as is the story of Abraham . . . if it is not the objective link between all then and now, and here and there; it must snap in our fingers when we say 'Abraham.' "

190 Cf. Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 265.

3.4.3 Conclusion

Many interpreters construe the interpretive options of Paul's use of Abraham in 4.1–25 such that he can be either an "example" of justification by faith or the father of Jews and Gentiles.[191] Similarly, there can be either a "covenantal and eschatological scheme" or an "atomized system of individual sin and salvation."[192] In the preceding sections I have argued that this is a false and misleading either/or. I have not argued for seeing Abraham merely as an example of the mechanics of justification; but this is neither because Abraham is not justified nor because those after Abraham do not "follow in Abraham's footsteps" (4.12). Paul insists that the promise has always been given by faith to those who are undeserving. Thus, Paul proclaims that God has been faithful to fulfill his promise to Abraham, which results in an inclusive family. But how? Abraham is father of Jews and Gentiles because he, like all Jews and Gentiles, received an unfitting gift (cf. 3.21–26; 5.1–21). The justification of an ungodly Abraham and the promise going to Jews and Gentiles are two parts of one whole. Paul has traced the nature of the unfitting gift of Christ all the way back to the giving of the promise to Abraham, which he interprets through the incongruity of the Christ-event (κατὰ χάριν).[193] Thus, as Schliesser argues, "The continuity between Abraham and the present believers is constituted and conserved by God himself, for he is and remains one and the same, the one God, who justifies the ungodly, who creates and gives life."[194]

That Paul can interpret Abraham's story through the Christ-event is significant for our turn to Romans 9–11 now.

3.5 *Romans 9–11: The Christ-Gift and the History of Israel*

In Romans 9–11 Paul is wrestling with the disbelief of many of his fellow Jews. The passage is stamped throughout by incongruous mercy—that nothing in the recipient or performed by the recipient makes one fitting.[195] Rather, God has always chosen Israel by grace and the continuance of the promised people is by mercy to the exclusion of human standards. The "pattern of incongruity" that shaped Abraham's story is present throughout the history of Israel; and,

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191 Cranford, "Abraham," 88.

192 Wright, "Role of Abraham," 236.

193 As E. Käsemann, "The Faith of Abraham in Romans 4," in *Perspectives on Paul* (London: SCM Press, 1971), 85 notes, the present tense of 4.5 demonstrates how Paul's Christology determines the character of the God who justifies.

194 Schliesser, *Abraham's Faith*, 405.

195 On Rom 9–11 as a whole, see esp. Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness*, chap. 7; S. Westerholm, "Paul and the Law in Romans 9–11," in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, 215–37.

again, this incongruous grace and mercy is intelligible only through a reconfiguration of divine generosity by the Christ-event. Paul here is treading on a problem that has a complement in Philo, and a comparison will focus our reading of Paul.

3.5.1 The Logic of Election

Paul is insistent that God's word—his promise—has not failed (9.4–5, 6, 9); thus, Paul traces God's electing activity from Abraham to the present time in which both Jews and Gentiles are saved by faith in Christ (10.9–13). Paul begins his argument with an unsettling claim: "not all who are from Israel *are* Israel" (9.6). While Paul does not dislocate ethnicity from the promise, he makes clear that election is not grounded by ethnicity: the "children of the promise" are reckoned for offspring (9.8; cf. 9.3–5).[196] Descent κατὰ σάρκα does not guarantee a place within the family of the promise.[197] On what grounds does Paul distinguish, then? For Paul, it is clear that Abraham's family depends on and is constituted by God's promise: "For the word of the promise (ἐπαγγελίας γὰρ ὁ λόγος) is this: at that time (κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον) I will come and Sarah will have a son" (9.9). The phrase κατὰ τὸν καιρόν echoes Paul's earlier argument that Christ's death for the ungodly was κατὰ καιρόν (5.6), which begins to disclose Paul's logic. Abraham and Sarah have a child because they believe in the God who raises the dead and who calls into existence that which does not exist (4.17); they have a child because God's promises are effective (9.9).[198] The promise always works with a destabilizing logic.

Philo would agree with Paul that the promise does not depend on ethnicity.[199] As Philo states, "neither are righteous parents of benefit to unrighteous offspring (οὔτε τοῖς ἀδίκοις δίκαιοι γονεῖς), nor are the self-controlled for the intemperate, nor are the wholly good for the wicked."[200] Indeed, "kinship is not

196 Cf. Westerholm, "Paul and the Law," 221–22.

197 As S. Grindheim, *The Crux of Election: Paul's Critique of the Jewish Confidence in the Election of Israel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 142 states, "All Israelites would agree that not all of Abraham's and Isaac's children were the elect, but Paul sharpens the point." Cf. N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 238.

198 Cf. J.M.G. Barclay, "'I Will Have Mercy on Whom I Have Mercy': The Golden Calf and Divine Mercy in Romans 9–11 and Second Temple Judaism," *EC* 1 (2010): 99.

199 As K. Haacker, "Die Geschichtstheologie von Röm 9–11 im Lichte Philonischer Schriftauslegung," *NTS* 43 (1997): 112 states, Philo's devaluation of physical descent has "eine andere Intention, aber doch eine vergleichbare Denkstruktur" to Paul. Cf. *Virt.* 207–10 with the claim that Abraham had many children (πολύπαις) but only one heir.

200 *Virt.* 194.

measured by blood only," but by a "similarity of actions" (πράξεων ὁμοιότητι).[201] Those who do not live virtuously negate their lineage and deserve punishment. Accordingly, Philo, like Paul, had to discover other grounds by which to explain why God acts favorably to some and not others. Thus, as we saw in chapter 1 (section 4.1), when Philo reads Gen 6.8, Philo needs to *explain why* Noah found favor without any prior working (μηδὲν πρότερον ἐργασάμενον).[202] Noah had a "praiseworthy constitution and nature," as his name means "righteous" or "rest" (δίκαιος). Accordingly, he lived righteously (ἐπὶ . . . δικαιοσύνῃ συζῶντα). Noah thus received grace not because of virtuous actions, but because of his virtuous nature, from which flowed virtuous actions. Paul, of course, does not use Noah, because he would not fit his argument and his promise-narrative begins with Abraham.[203]

Philo similarly explains that Abraham was begotten by God with an image "worthy of zeal" (σπουδῆς ἄξιον) and Isaac's nature and name were "moulded and appointed and chosen to have the best lot before birth." By contrast, Abraham for Paul was justified while ungodly (4.2–8), and Isaac's existence is due solely to God's faithfulness to the promise (9.7–9).

How Philo and Paul handle God's election of Jacob over Esau is the most revealing. As both Philo and Paul know, despite the fact that Esau is older—Isaac's rightful heir—God chose Jacob. Why? For Philo God's foreknowledge is crucial: God the creator knows his works before they are finished, foreknowing their faculties, works, and passions (τὰ ἔργα καὶ πάθη).[204] That which is a "slave by nature" (Esau) is base and irrational, but the virtuous man is free, rational, and good. A mere "breeze of virtue" (μικρά . . . αὖρα τῆς ἀρετῆς) signals whether one will be virtuous or wicked; and God chooses accordingly. By contrast, for Paul God does not choose based on foreknowing what Jacob and Esau will be or do; rather, God chooses before they were born precisely so that his election is before they had "done anything good or bad" (πραξάντων τι ἀγαθὸν ἢ φαῦλον; 9.11). Indeed, God's electing purpose (ἡ κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ; 9.12) is dependent on occurring "not by works but by the one who calls" (οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος).[205] As Gaventa argues, the language of calling here is

201 *Virt.* 195. See throughout 187–97.

202 But cf. the revealing phrase: ὅσα γε εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν ἐπίγνωσιν.

203 As J.R. Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 47 notes, this is a "highly selective and abbreviated retelling of Israel's history."

204 *Leg.* 3.88–89.

205 The parallel with 9.11 (as well as 4.2–5 and 11.5–6) makes the claim by J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16* (Waco: Word, 1988), 543 that ἐξ ἔργων refers to "works of law" somewhat implausible.

dependent on Rom 4.17: God's calling is a calling-into-being.[206] Jacob's election is not based on his actions, but on the God who creates by electing. Israel is a "*creatura verbi Dei*."[207]

Accordingly, if Philo traces God's rational giving back into the person's soul-type and thus whether they will be virtuous, Paul undercuts any such logic. Philo is uncomfortable with the idea that God would give gifts arbitrarily; Paul insists that God's election seems nothing but arbitrary, without compliance to social, moral, or ethnic codes. Although both ruled out ethnicity as a determinant for God's favor/election, Philo insists on moral standards.[208]

Philo concludes that there are "two natures" created by God, one praiseworthy and one blameworthy.[209] God gives to the former, not the latter. Philo quotes Moses' prayer in Deut 28.12 for God to "open for us his own treasury" and to close the treasuries of evil things. God graciously, allows for "time for repentance and the fixing of the false step." One can stop being wicked and act virtuously, and consequently receive God's favor. For Philo, the question is whether God is a wise God who gives properly to the worthy. For Paul, the question is, since God gives without consideration of the typical standards of worth—ethnicity, birthright, moral standing—is there ἀδικία with God (9.14)? God's response to Moses in Exod 33.19 explains Paul's emphatic μὴ γένοιτο: "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion" (9.15). For Philo, this inexplicable ἔλεος is ἀδικία; for Paul, inexplicable ἔλεος is the scriptural answer to the charge of ἀδικία. God is merciful, but not according to patterns explicable by human standards.[210] The object of God's mercy is indeterminate; and Paul immediately presses this inscrutable logic further: everything depends "not on the one who wills nor the one who runs, but on God who has mercy" (τοῦ ἐλεῶντος θεοῦ; 9.16). To the exclusion

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However, as Westerholm, "Paul and the Law," 223 states, Paul is "not polemicizing against human beings' *doing* anything"—that is, the actions themselves are not critiqued "but merely declared irrelevant in the inscrutable selection of the objects of divine mercy."

206 B.R. Gaventa, "On the Calling-Into-Being of Israel: Romans 9:6–29," in *Between Gospel and Election: Explorations in the Interpretation of Romans 9–11* (eds. F. Wilk and J.R. Wagner; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 255–69.

207 Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 153.

208 Cf. Haacker, "Geschichtstheologie von Röm 9–11," 213.

209 *Leg.* 3.104–06.

210 Cf. S.G. Eastman, "Israel and the Mercy of God: A Re-reading of Galatians 6.16 and Romans 9–11," *NTS* 56 (2010): 377.

of anything inherent to the human, the promise is dependent solely on God's choice in his creative mercy.[211]

This counter-logic explains both the creation and continuance of historical Israel as well as God's calling of Gentiles in the present. Paul adapts Hosea 2.23 in 9.24–26 to apply it to Gentiles as the counterpart to 9.12–13. Jacob's election was dependent not on works, but on God who calls (καλέω), and it is Jacob "I have loved" (ἀγαπάω). Similarly, Paul argues that "we" whom God has "called" (καλέω) in the present—in Christ—are from both Jews and Gentiles. Paul reworks the verbs in his Hosea citations so that the language of calling and love are prominent.[212] "I will call (καλέω) not my people my people, and not beloved (ἀγαπάω) beloved." As God chose Jacob without any explicable reason beyond God's mercy, so God's people, including Gentiles, are called and loved despite their nonexistence (οὐ λαόν μου) and lack of worth (οὐκ ἠγαπημένην).[213] To unfitting objects, God promises "you are my people," and thus "they will be called (καλέω) children of the living God." Both Jews and Gentiles who receive God's electing mercy are called into being by that same mercy.[214]

Thus, although Gentiles did not pursue righteousness (by the Law), they have attained righteousness by faith;[215] Jews, however, pursued the Law of righteousness but did not attain it (9.30–31). Why did Jews not attain it? Because not by faith (οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως) but as by works (ἐξ ἔργων) they stumbled over the stumbling stone, Christ (9.32).[216] Whatever worth comes ἐξ ἔργων, from "pursuing righteousness," Paul insists that God works in election and for salvation outside of those systems.[217] If it is not by works but by God who calls (9.12), then Israel's pursuit of righteousness by works is misguided. Accordingly, Gentiles, only by God's inexplicable mercy, have attained righteousness by faith; God has been found by those not seeking him (10.20). Israel, then, is stumbling (9.32),

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211 Barclay, "Divine Mercy," 98: "For Paul divine mercy is itself the creative agent in Israel's history, not its restorative assistant. Israel is not rehabilitated by mercy so much as established by it."

212 Cf. Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 319–21; Wagner, *Heralds*, 79–81.

213 Cf. Grindheim, *Crux of Election*, 149.

214 On how this relates to the olive-tree metaphor in 11.16–24, see Barclay, "Divine Mercy," 103; N. Walter, "Zur Interpretation vom Römer 9–11," *ZTK* 81 (1984): 177–86. For a particularly Philonic horticultural metaphor, see *Praem.* 172.

215 Wagner, *Heralds*, 121 notes that this statement "encapsulates the point made more poetically by Hosea" in 9.24–26.

216 Cf. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 156; Jewett, *Romans*, 611.

217 As Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 329 n.44 argues, in 9.30–10.5 "the emphasis is on the *praxis* that corresponds to the 'privilege' of the νομοθεσία (9.4)."

seeking their own righteousness while being ignorant of God's righteousness (10.3), disobediently refusing God's outstretched hand (10.21). Can it be the case that God has rejected his people (11.1)? Of course not: Paul is counter-evidence to this belief. There remains a remnant "in the now time" which is "according to the election of grace" (11.5). As in 3.26, ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ is the eschatological "now" of the Christ-event. The remnant who exists in this "now" are not those who have displayed their worth and have thus been the objects of God's favor; rather, existing according to elective grace means election not ἐξ ἔργων, for then grace would not be grace (ἡ χάρις οὐκέτι γίνεται χάρις; 10.6).[218] God's word of promise is never made effective by human works—whatever they may be—or anything that could establish a human as worthy, but because of God who calls and has mercy without thought for worth.[219]

Consequently, Paul finds the same inexplicable mercy that is operative in the present (9.24–33; 11.1–6) at work in God's actions in history (9.6–18).

3.5.2 The Introduction of the Disjunction

The source of Paul's disjunctive logic—not by works, Law, ethnicity, birthright, but by faith, grace, mercy, calling—remains his particular Christology. If when God pours his love out it is in Christ's death for the ungodly (5.5–8), and the revelation and proof of his righteousness is the redemption of sinners in Jesus Christ (3.21–26), whom he gave up for trespasses and raised for justification (4.25), for Paul this is defining of who God is. God thus is the one who justifies the ungodly, who calls what does not exist into existence, and has mercy. Because of the disjunctive nature of his death—for the unworthy, the godless—Christ is the Lord of all (10.12). Salvation is thus only by faith, which results from the proclamation of the "word of faith," the "word of Christ" (10.8, 17). It is this assertion that grounds Paul's antitheses in 9.32 and 11.5–6 and is displayed in his understanding of divine election. God has "placed in Zion the stumbling stone and rock of scandal," and "the one who believes on him will not be put to shame" (9.33). Jesus is the Lord in whom one believes;[220] and the one who believes will not be put to shame (καταισχυνθήσεται; 10.11).[221]

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218 Eastman, "Mercy of God," 379: "because the remnant is 'chosen by grace' without any recourse to its own actions, its very existence demonstrates God's freedom to 'have mercy on whom I will have mercy.'"

219 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 76–77: Grace is "that which happens to everyone without an assignable reason."

220 On the identification of Jesus as κύριος here and the Christological implications, see C.K. Rowe, "Romans 10:13: What Is the Name of the Lord?," *HBT* 22 (2000): 135–73.

221 E.E. Johnson, *The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9–11* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 127–28 argues that compound verbs of αἰσχύνω often refer to shame before God's eschatological judgment. This makes sense here and in 5.5 and 9.33.

Since Christ is the τέλος νόμου, righteousness is not "by works" but is to "all who believe" (10.4). In other words, Christ is the end to the means by which one might seek to be a fitting object of God's favor. Thus, not righteousness by Law, but righteousness by faith (10.5–6).[222] Precisely because God's promise fulfilled in the Christ-gift comes regardless of ethnicity (9.7–9), works or Law (9.11–12, 16, 30–32; 10.3–6) and thus by grace (11.5–6), Jesus is the Lord of Jews and Gentiles—without distinction (10.12)[223]—and "acts richly (πλουτῶν) towards *all* who call upon him" (10.12).

Consequently, if the temporary hardening of Israel is for the sake of saving Gentiles, and the grafting in of Gentiles for saving Jews, this is because "God consigned all to disobedience, so that he might have mercy on all" (ἵνα τοὺς πάντας ἐλεήσῃ; 11.30–32).[224] The duality of electing/hardening of 9.6–29 and beyond moves to a single purpose; "at the right time Christ died for the ungodly" (5.6). Paul's argument would seem capricious to Philo. Paul revels in the fact that God's election by grace is morally and culturally inexplicable because it is dependent solely on God's willing to be merciful. Thus, Paul closes his argument with doxology, but Philo would have to make Paul's questions *real questions*: how unsearchable (ἀνεξεραύνητος) *are* his judgments, and how inscrutable (ἀνεξιχνίαστος) *are* his ways (11.33)? Inscrutability is not a virtue for Philo: precisely what the universe depends on is a God whose ways are scrutable and whose judgments are searchable. If one finds divine favor precisely as one who is without worth, the moral-cosmological order is called into question; arbitrary grace runs counter to who God is as creator. Philo could affirm that God is the God of all, who gives richly to those who are virtuous, and in this sense, particularly to "Israel." His understanding of giving differs from Paul not because God is less gracious but because God does not give regardless of moral norms; Philo could not place a disjunction between grace

222 That 10.5–6 are antithetically related, see P.M. Sprinkle, *Law and Life: The Interpretation of Leviticus 18.5 in Early Judaism and Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 170–73; also Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 327 n.93–94, in response to R.B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: YUP, 1989), 76.

223 As Rowe, "Romans 10:13," 146 notes, the lack of distinction in 10.12 is the positive corollary of 3.22: "The correlation of the positive and negative sides of the same statement presents us with the picture of anthropological universality we find Paul painting fully in Rom 5:12–21: all sin, and precisely so there is no distinction; all find salvation in Christ, and precisely so there is no distinction. This anthropological assertion finds its ground in the theological universality which it assumes."

224 Cf. Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 339 on the "different" but "symmetrical" way both Jews and Gentiles are objects of God's mercy. "Christ embodies both the divine faithfulness to the promises to Israel and the divine mercy to Gentiles, and ultimately God's faithfulness and God's mercy are one and the same."

and works. For Paul, that disjunction is key to tracing the thread of God's merciful election within Israel, and the ultimate salvation of Jews and Gentiles rests on it.[225]

3.5.3 Conclusion

God's word has not failed (9.6), and God's gifts to and calling of Israel have not been revoked (τὰ χαρίσματα καὶ ἡ κλῆσις; 11.29). Paul views these gifts and the calling from a particular perspective—ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ—and thus makes the counterintuitive claim that God's gifts to Israel are not forsaken precisely because of the destabilizing logic of hardening, mercy, and incongruous grace.[226] God hardens for the sake of saving, consigns to disobedience for the sake of showing mercy. What was revealed in the Christ-event is revelatory of the nature of God's promise and thus of God himself. The Christ-event, as the event that reshapes history and effects new creation, consequently patterns history;[227] and it is only from the vantage point of this event that Paul's logic makes sense vis-à-vis his contemporaries like Philo.

Romans 11.33–36 is thus a concise summary and fitting conclusion of Paul's argument. Paul praises the "depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God" (βάθος πλούτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως θεοῦ); no human was God's counselor, and none can plumb this eternal logic. Paul asks "who has given [a gift] to him beforehand (προέδωκεν), so that it will be given back (ἀνταποδοθήσεται) to him?" (11.35). This question undercuts any presumed worth before God: none have given to God beforehand and therefore put God in their debt. Rather, God's working for salvation is due to his willing alone. Accordingly, "all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (10.13).[228]

3.6 *Conclusion to Romans*

As we have seen in Romans 3.21–26 and 5.12–21, for Paul the Christ-event is the definitive enactment of God's grace within history, and all other gifts are given in relation to the Christ-event. The gift of the Spirit makes the Christ-gift

225 Grindheim, *Crux of Election* thus speaks of a Pauline "pattern of reversal of values," which is not unlike the "pattern of incongruity" mentioned above.

226 Cf. J.M.G. Barclay, "Unnerving Grace: Approaching Romans 9–11 from The Wisdom of Solomon," in *Between Gospel and Election*, 107.

227 In the words of J.L. Martyn, "Events in Galatia: Modified Covenantal Nomism Versus God's invasion of the Cosmos in the Singular Gospel: A Response to J.D.G. Dunn and B.R. Gaventa," in *Pauline Theology: Volume One* (ed. J.M. Bassler; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 165, Paul proclaims an "evangelical, cosmic, history-creating Christology."

228 Cf. Rowe, "Romans 10:13," 158: "All, and not all Israel alone, who call upon the name of Jesus Christ will be saved. The πᾶς of Joel 3:5 is universally expanded in light of Jesus Christ."

present in the life of the believer, and the gift of righteousness is given in and as a result of the Christ-event. Paul's understanding of divine gift *as* the Christ-event plays a profound role in reinterpreting history: this one event shapes all history. Hence, in Romans 4 and 9–11, Paul interprets the stories of Abraham and Israel through the disjunctive logic of the Christ-event: the unfitting gift of Christ is the fulfillment of a promise that has always been incongruous to its recipients. The Christ-event is thus Paul's hermeneutic for history as it has reshaped his understanding of who God is.

4 Paul, Philo, Christ and Cosmos

We can now tie up some comparisons between Philo and Paul. Although perhaps the most pressing comparison is how exactly Paul and Philo differ on the issue of fitting/unfitting gifts, we will leave this comparison for the next chapter after more pieces are on the board. Philo and Paul are by no means identical on this point, but neither are they simply antithetical; finessing the actual differences is critical.

Three main points of comparison relating to this chapter may be noted here.

4.1 *God as Generous Giver*

For both Philo and Paul, God is abundantly generous; but each conceives of God's giving differently because they look to two different places in history to understand God's beneficence. Philo views the creation of the world as the fundamental outpouring of God's munificence, and the result of this—creation as gifting—is that everything is gift. Thus, as we have seen, when Noah "finds grace" before God, what he discovers is that "all things are a gift of God" (χάριν ὄντα θεοῦ τὰ πάντα).[229] The cause of creation itself is God's goodness and graciousness; consequently, Philo interprets all reality through his understanding of creation as gift. By contrast, Paul does not look back to the act of creation for understanding God's gift-giving activities; rather, he looks to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[230] There is a subtle change of emphasis: for Philo *God* is a superabundant giver, for Paul God gives a superabundant *gift*. The two

229 *Deus* 107.

230 This is not to say that Paul views God's identity as creator as unimportant (cf., e.g., 1 Cor 8.6; 10.26; Rom 1.20–25), but rather that God's identity as creator is intextricably linked to, and understood by, his identity as the one who gave Jesus Christ (Rom 4.17). The one who said, "Let light shine out of darkness" is the one who graciously shined "in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4.6).

aspects cannot be divorced, but the distinction is interesting. From the creation of the world Philo can propound how God is φιλόδωρος because he has given everything that exists; from the Christ-event Paul insistently emphasizes the utter grace-excess of that act. Thus, it is the Christ-event and righteousness that "abound" and "super-abound" (Rom 5.15–20), as it is in God's gift of Jesus that believers have been "made rich in every way" (ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε ἐν αὐτῷ; 1 Cor 1.5) as God's riches are *in Jesus Christ* (Phil 4.19). Accordingly, it is not that Paul does not emphasize God's graciousness, but he does so precisely by pointing to the absurd generosity of this one gift. Indeed, for Paul the gift is precisely what proves God's righteousness (Rom 3.25–26). Inversely, for Philo the world, properly interpreted, is evidence of God's generosity, not its proof.

4.2 *God's Fundamental Gift*

As point one indicates, Philo and Paul look to creation and the Christ-event not simply as the most concentrated instances of God's giving, but as the gift by which God's generosity is defined. Philo's God is the beneficent creator, as the activities of creating and giving are located in the same Power. Paul's God is the one who gave Jesus Christ, where the Christ-event is therefore not an instance of divine grace but rather its definitive revelation.

For both this primary gift has closely associated gifts that always accompany the main gift. Philo's belief is that the world is the "first, greatest, and most perfect of God's works" that is given because of God's graciousness.[231] The entire universe is God's great gift (τὸ μέγα δῶρον θεοῦ τὸν παντελῆ κόσμον); and the gifts associated with this primary gift are the "particular gifts" (ἐν μέρει δωρεαί) God gives to humanity: the virtues and the corresponding energies (αὗται δ' ἂν εἶεν ἀρεταὶ καὶ αἱ κατ' αὐτὰς ἐνέργειαι).[232] Likewise, built into the cosmos are God's Law and Logos, which structure the world and provide the roadmap and empowerment for virtuous living. By living in accordance with these gifts that accompany the world—living in accordance with Law and Logos, developing in virtue—one becomes more attuned to the cosmos itself, the primary gift. And by doing so, by being drawn into this first gift, one ascends to God.

Similarly, Paul proclaims a fundamental gift that anchors the other gifts in the divine economy. The event of Christ's death and resurrection is unequivocally *the* divine gift by which the divine-human relationship is reestablished. The gift of the Spirit is intimately tied to this gift as the means by which one

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In terms of priority, when Paul thinks about God's generosity, Christ precedes creation, though the two are conceptually linked (i.e., the gift of Christ is itself *creative*).

231 *Deus* 106–08.

232 *Ebr* 117–19.

receives the Christ-gift, and the gifts associated with the Christ-event—that are inextricable from the Christ-event itself—are the gifts of righteousness and reconciliation. Through justification by faith and the act of reconciliation, humans have peace with God and participate in the body of Christ—in his death and resurrection—as those who have Christ's Spirit indwelling them. So for both Philo and Paul, broadly speaking, the gifts closely associated with the primary gift bring humans *into* that primary gift.[233] Yet for Philo, God's gifts help humans become more virtuous, while for Paul, God's gifts presuppose that the recipients are unrighteous and estranged from God: new life is accomplished through death.

World history looks very different if one's understanding of God is based either on the creation of an immutable moral universe or on a crucified Jewish man. Creation and the Christ-event become the lenses through which Philo and Paul, respectively, view the world and world-history. Yet, if for Philo God's generosity is his creative power, the same is true for Paul; but, differently, Paul understands God's creative activity from the particular act of giving in Christ, and not vice-versa. The God who raised Jesus is the God who calls into existence that which does not exist. As Seifrid puts it, "God the Creator is to be understood in terms of his action in the cross, and not the cross in terms of God's activity as Creator: crux probat omnia."[234]

4.3 *The Gift as Giver*

God demonstrates his graciousness in a single gift; and interestingly, for both Philo and Paul that gift is also a giver. But for Philo the world *qua* giver is really a way of describing how God gives and how God has ordered the world for the benefit of humanity. Accordingly, in whatever way Nature or the world can be considered to give something, it must always ultimately be attributed to God, the first and only cause. For Paul, however, as we have seen, the Christ-event is God's gift of Christ but also Christ's self-gift, a fact that is inherent to the particularity of the gift. Yet, unlike Philo, Paul makes no distinctions between God and Christ as gift-givers. Philo's philosophical-theological concerns with distinguishing the world from God were not entirely Paul's concerns (though Paul also maintains a Creator/creature distinction), but it is salient that Paul felt no need to make any such distinctions on this point.

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233 We will return to this point in chapter 5.

234 M.A. Seifrid, "'The Gift of Salvation': Its Failure to Address the Crux of Justification," *JETS* 42 (1999): 684.

Two points on Christ's relation to God in gift-giving deserve to be expanded briefly.

First, the Christ-gift is given *equally* by God and Jesus.[235] The word "equally" is, of course, loaded, but it is difficult to think of another way to capture this phenomenon.[236] In six of seven letters, Paul begins with χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 1.7; 1 Cor 1.3; 2 Cor 1.2; Gal 1.3; Phil 1.2; Phlm 3); the other simply has χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη, but it is given to the Thessalonians who are ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ (1 Thess 1.1). Consequently, Paul always establishes that divine favor comes not from God alone, but from God and Jesus. Paul can also designate God or Jesus alone as Giver. God "did not spare his own son but for all of us gave him up" (Rom 8.32; cf. also 3.25; 4.25; 5.8; 1 Cor 1.4), and references to God's grace are abundant (Rom 5.15; 1 Cor 1.4; 15.10; 2 Cor 1.12; 6.1; 8.1; 9.14; Gal 2.21). Paul speaks also about Christ's self-giving: Christ is the one "who gave himself for our sins" (Gal 1.4), who "loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2.20), whose χάρις is explicated as his "becoming poor" (2 Cor 8.9), and who was obedient unto the cross (Phil 2.6–8). Accordingly, references to Christ's grace are also abundant (Rom 5.15; 16.20; 1 Cor 16.23; 2 Cor 8.9; 13.13; Gal 1.6; Phil 4.23; Phlm 25). Thus, as Barclay states, "If the self-giving of Christ is also, at the same time, the 'inexpressible gift' of God (2 Cor 9.15)—as much God's gift of his Son (Rom 8.32) as Christ's giving of himself (Gal 1.4; 2.20)—the Christ story reshapes our understanding of God."[237] Or Bockmuehl: "The gift of the Lord Jesus is at once the gift of God the Father: that is the acorn from which could sprout a wealth of subsequent Christology."[238]

Second, Paul uses other prepositions that are important for configuring the Jesus-God relationship: grace is *from* God and Jesus, but God's grace is also given *through* and *in* Jesus. God is the "one God *from whom* are all things"

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235 *Pace* Crook, *Conversion*, 195, it is not helpful to assert that "Jesus as broker is always subordinate to God as divine patron." This move forces a model onto Paul's gift-theology that cannot always make sense of the evidence. Furthermore, Crook states that the "confusion of the two for one is a later theological development" that would have seemed odd, if not insulting, to Paul. Crook gives the example of a person worshipping a priest of Asclepius rather than Asclepius, which would be an affront to Asclepius' honor. However, the studies of Watson and Rowe cited in this chapter, and also the work of L.W. Hurtado and R. Bauckham, demonstrate that Crook's argument is misguided.

236 On which, cf. Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity*, 22.

237 J.M.G. Barclay, "Manna and the Circulation of Grace: A Study of 2 Corinthians 8:1–15," in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays* (ed. J.R. Wagner, C.K. Rowe, and A.K. Grieb; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 421 n.22.

238 M. Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (London: A&C Black, 1997), 57.

(ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα) and Jesus is the "one Lord *through whom* are all things and we are *through him*" (δι᾽ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι᾽ αὐτοῦ; 1 Cor 8.6). Thus, God has given to believers "the victory" through Jesus (1 Cor 15.57), God's reconciliation occurs "through Jesus" (Rom 5.11; 2 Cor 5.18), and God will raise believers "through Jesus" (1 Thess 4.14). For Paul, God's giving to humanity in creation and for salvation occurs always διὰ Χριστοῦ. Equally significant is that Jesus is the locus of God's action, love, and favor in the world. God's reconciling work was not only through Jesus, but God was "*in Jesus* reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor 5.19), God's grace is given *in* Jesus (ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ; 1 Cor 1.4), and grace is the redemption *in* Jesus (Rom 3.24). Thus, it is not surprising that God's "riches in glory" are "in Christ Jesus" (κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος αὐτοῦ ἐν δόξῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ; Phil 4.19) and God's love from which believers will never be separated is God's love *in Christ Jesus* (ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ; Rom 8.39). Accordingly, the gift of the Spirit is the Spirit of God and Jesus (Rom 8.9–11).

Paul's gift-theology, therefore, can have significant implications for how we configure the God-Christ relationship. God is not Giver apart from Christ, because God's gift is also Christ's gift and Christ's love is God's love: the divine and human are united in the gift.[239] As God's being and act are inseparable, and God's act is an act through and in Christ, God cannot be abstracted from Christ.[240] For Paul, Jesus is certainly the "one man," but the Christ-gift has its earth-shattering and recreating power in that this gift is not simply the gift of a human; rather, only in Christ by the Spirit is God's nature as gift-giver fully revealed and expressed. Paul's theology of gift thus forces one to rethink who God is—in relation to Christ—by making a claim about who Jesus is and what Jesus as gift does. But that, unfortunately, is a question to be fully explored elsewhere.[241]

Accordingly, as we have seen with Philo, God the Existent One (ὁ ὤν) does not act upon the world without mediation; God only gives gifts through "God" the power (ὁ θεός), the "creative power" (ἡ ποιητικὴ δύναμις).[242] For Paul, the

239 I take this point as not being unrelated to the argument of Rowe, "Romans 10:13" about the theological import of God and Christ both being "Lord."

240 Cf. Watson, "Triune Divine Identity," 105–19 for this connection of being and agency.

241 For two different ways of developing these thoughts, see esp. Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity*, 1–34 and O. Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation* (trans. T.H. Trapp; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 221–38, 254.

242 One could broaden the conversation to compare more generally Jesus with Philo's Logos. The Logos is, in a sense, *more* than the Powers; but the Logos is also where the Powers are located, and the agent that divides the powers, so what is said in this section is broadly applicable to the Logos as well. A broader comparison between Jesus and the Logos—for

gift is given by God and by Jesus Christ but also through Jesus. Paul's concern is not to cordon God from the world by enlisting Jesus as the mediator of God's giving, but rather the way he construes God's giving locates it entirely in and through Jesus. As the author of 1 Timothy declared, "For there is one God, one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself . . ." (2.5–6). As Philo's Powers bridge the divide between God and the world, so Jesus does for Paul—but for different purposes. The Powers allow God to remain ontologically distinct from and untainted by the creation; Jesus is the site where God and the world are reconciled, and therefore Jesus does not keep humanity and God separate but is rather precisely the location where the two come together.

5 Conclusion

When we compare Paul and Philo on grace, perhaps the first question that must be asked is: Where is God's grace found? Paul and Philo both speak at length about God's grace, but they do so differently because, as I have shown in this chapter, their starting points and definitions of divine χάρις are incommensurate: Philo starts with creation as the perfect gift that establishes a moral order that needs to be upheld; Paul starts with the death and resurrection of Christ, an event that subverts all moral, ethnic, and social order. That is, both Paul's and Philo's understandings of divine generosity take shape from a particular event. For Philo, God creates and gives gifts in the same power, such that creation and subsequent giving become mutually interpretive. For Paul, God's generosity is defined by the Christ-gift and is located in the person of Christ: God justifies the ungodly, elects without thought of worth, creates from nothing. The indelibly Christological shape of grace means that all of history is determined by this event, which becomes the pattern of God's actions that can only be understood, for Paul, after the event and through faith. Divine unfitting grace in the Christ-event is thus the axiomatic foundation of Paul's gift-economy.[243] It is because—and only because—God has given Christ that one

example, looking at how both are the "image of God"—is beyond the scope of this section. On the Logos, see above (chap. 2, section 2.2). For an overview of the basic data for a comparison between Philo and Paul on the Logos and Jesus as "the Word," see J.D.G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (2nd ed.; London: SCM Press, 1989), 220–39.

243 Cf. Moo, *Romans*, 307: "Paul never thinks of God's love for us apart from the cross, and he never thinks of Christ's dying for us apart from the Father's giving of the Son."

can trust that God "will also give all things to us with him" (Rom 8.32). Philo is separated from Paul by the particularity of the Christ-event.

Paul's understanding of the Christ-gift as an unfitting gift given to the unworthy leads us into the next chapter. As we will see, Paul presents himself as the paradigm of one who receives the gift despite being unworthy. Integrally tied with Paul's reception of the Christ-gift is his apostleship, that he might preach the gospel of the unfitting gift to unworthy recipients. In Paul's view, the gift is given to the unworthy through the unworthy apostle, and preaching is how the hearing of the word occurs and the gift given. Intrinsic to the gift is that it is for the unworthy and must be proclaimed. The next chapter will focus on the role of the unworthy apostle as proclaimer of the gift of Christ to groups of unworthy individuals: the inseparable bond between Paul as *unworthy* and Paul as *Apostle*.

CHAPTER 4

Proclaiming and Receiving the Incongruous Gift

Amor Dei non invenit sed creat suum diligibile . . .[1]

1 Introduction: The Root of Human Unworthiness

For Philo, humans are unworthy to receive divine benefactions when they live lawlessly, without virtue, contrary to right reason. But why do humans live like this? As we have seen, the foundation of piety is a proper conception of God as the Cause of all good things.[2] However, one can erroneously locate causation in oneself or in something created; this is the height of impiety, because it results in not giving God his due gratitude.[3] Deviation from a proper conception of God precipitates immoral living, the ramification of which is retribution. Thus, the end (τέλος) for those who adopt "polytheistic opinions" (πολυθέοι δόξαι)—or, really, anything but proper monotheism—is ungodliness (ἀθεότης).[4] The atheist receives no gifts. A similar picture emerges in Romans 1, where God's wrath is revealed against "all ungodliness and injustice (πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν) of humans who suppress the truth (ἀλήθεια) in unrighteousness" (1.18). God has revealed what can be known of him "since the creation of the world" (ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου; 1.20), his "eternal power and deity" (ἀΐδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης). Humans are therefore "without excuse;" although they "know God," they have not honored or given thanks to him (ἐδόξασαν ἢ ηὐχαρίστησαν; 1.21).[5] Rather, they "exchanged" God's glory for the "likeness of the image of perishable" created things (1.23); they worshipped the created rather than the

1 M. Luther, "Disputatio Heidelbergae Habita (1518)" (*WA* 1; Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1883), 354. Translated: "The love of God does not find, but creates, that which is pleasing to it." For commentary, see G.O. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross: Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 112–17.

2 Cf. chapter 1, sections 2.1–4 for discussion and texts.

3 Cf. *Post*. 33–39 on Cain.

4 *Praem*. 162. Also, *Sacr*. 54–57.

5 J.A. Linebaugh, "Announcing the Human: Rethinking the Relationship Between Wisdom of Solomon 13–15 and Romans 1.18–2.11," *NTS* 57 (2011): 228: "we . . . learn that to be human *in history* is to be a rebel against this creational revelation."

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Creator (κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα; 1.25).[6] Consequently, God "has handed them over"—they live immorally, not doing the things they should and doing the things they should not (1.24, 26, 28). They know what God requires (τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ), but they do things that are worthy of death (ἄξιοι θανάτου; 1.32).

Broadly construed, for both Philo and Paul the root of human unworthiness is either ignorance of God or an improper perception of who God is as Creator and Giver, which results in ingratitude and dishonor.[7] However, while the root problem is similar, the prognosis is not. If for Philo this issue can be resolved by humans following the path of Abraham—moving from ignorance to a sure conception of who God is—for Paul the problem is insurmountable. Sin and death are the inescapable reality for all who have been "handed over" and are unable to regain a proper perception of God to honor him rightly and thus act fittingly. For Philo, since God is the cause of all good things, including virtuous human agency, works cannot be distinguished from grace; grace grounds and makes possible human works that constitute one as virtuous. For Paul, grace is focused in Christ and human action is excluded as grounds by which one may be fitting to receive from God.[8] If "in Christ all will be made alive," Paul's logic is that "in Adam all die" (1 Cor 15.22); and, to borrow a phrase, "the dead do not improve."[9] The God who handed sinful humans over to their own devices (Rom 11.32; cf. Gal 3.2) is the God who gives an unfitting gift to those same humans. Philo's world is the moral testing-ground of humans who can fittingly receive gifts from God; Paul's sin-enslaved world is disrupted by the Christ-gift that is inexplicably received by those who do not deserve it, given by a God who gives no thought to typical canons of worth.

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how three aspects of Paul's theology of divine gift converge in the person of Paul himself. First, Paul's testimony is paradigmatic, a concrete instantiation of the truth that all receive grace unfittingly. Second, Paul's association—or identification—of grace and apostleship reveals how his apostleship is interlocked with the Christ-gift. Paul is not merely an unworthy recipient of the gift but more specifically an unworthy apostle who proclaims the gift. As Satake states, "χάρις manifestiert sich für

6 As S.J. Gathercole, "Sin in God's Economy: Agencies in Romans 1 and 7," in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment* (ed. J.M.G. Barclay and S.J. Gathercole; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 159 states, "Whichever category is used, this suppression/exchange is a kind of meta-sin in Romans 1."

7 Cf. Barclay, "Grace and Agency," 140.

8 Of course, Paul, like Philo, does not do away with human agency, but he removes it from the equation of how one receives grace; see further next chapter.

9 J.C. Kang, *The Dead Do Not Improve: A Novel* (New York: Hogarth, 2012).

Paulus immer im apostolischen Dienst."[10] Third and consequently, Paul views apostolic proclamation of the gift as inherent in the gift itself, and thus the mode by which others receive the gift; the reception of the incongruous Christ-gift by Paul's churches is inextricable from their apostle, for through proclamation one receives the Spirit and thus the gift.[11] The Apostle, as the paradigm of the unworthy recipient, is commissioned to bring other unworthy individuals into the power of God's gift in Christ. Apostolic proclamation is thus an outworking of the gift on the historical plane: in preaching, Paul reveals the crucified and risen Christ, and by the Spirit the unworthy hearers are drawn into the gift-event.

The chapter will begin by examining those passages where Paul seems to link or identify divine grace and his apostleship. I will then focus on two passages—Gal 1–2; 1 Cor 15—where the themes of divine gift, incongruity, and apostleship are interwoven. In the next section I will survey 2 Corinthians 5–6 to explore how Paul coordinates divine gift-giving and apostolic proclamation. The chapter will close with a comparison with Philo on worth and gifts and how gifts are mediated.

2 Paul and the Unfitting Gift

2.1 *Paul's Apostleship as Grace*

Paul does not use grace and apostleship language uniformly: he can say "grace and apostleship" (Rom 1.5), which implies a distinction, he can speak of receiving his apostleship from God (Gal 1.1), which suggests its gift-nature, or he can refer to the "grace of God given to me" in contexts that entail the gift is his apostleship (e.g. 1 Cor 3.10). Consequently, given this flexibility, Satake argues that Paul could make the two concepts overlap—apostleship as gift[12]—while Best asserts that Paul never called his apostleship a gift.[13] If the Christ-event is *the* gift, how could he inflate the concept to include his apostleship? As noted above, I will argue that the preaching of the gospel is for Paul an extension of

10 A. Satake, "Apostolat und Gnade bei Paulus," *NTS* 15 (1968): 100.

11 Space precludes attempting to map Paul onto patronage models; however, the closest to my argument is the "brokerage" model, which "introduces a third party into the patron–client alliance, an intermediary who distributes the goods of the patron to the client and likewise mediates the reciprocating return of the client back to the patron." D. Briones, "Mutual Brokers of Grace: A Study in 2 Corinthians 1.3–11," *NTS* 56 (2010): 536–56, at 537.

12 Satake, "Apostolat und Gnade."

13 E. Best, "Paul's Apostolic Authority-?," *JSNT* 8 (1986): 9.

the Christ-event on the historical plane. That is, the enacted-in-the-past Christ-gift is received in the present through the Spirit (Rom 5.5), which is at work in proclamation by the one in whom God's son has been revealed (Gal 1.16).

In Rom 1.5 Paul declares that through Jesus "we have received grace and apostleship (ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολήν) for the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles." How do the two nouns relate? A popular view is that the construction is a hendiadys, where the second noun is explicative: grace, that is, apostleship.[14] I believe that this interpretation is correct; nevertheless, many scholars dissent from this reading, and it is worth noting why.

For Jewett, the problem is that the hendiadys "would then suggest that other apostles received their calling at the moment of conversion just as Paul had."[15] Grace "overcomes an insufficiency," making apostolic service possible; but not all apostles would have had stories like Paul's. Likewise, Schütz argues that grace and apostleship are parallel but distinct concepts, where grace is an "enabling presupposition" for apostleship.[16] Both arguments depend on a reading of Galatians 1.15–16, according to which conversion (grace) is conceptually distinct from commission (apostleship), and they presuppose that the words "grace and apostleship" have the same referents as in Galatians. But what Paul says elsewhere cannot be imported here without justification. Furthermore, this reading implicitly assumes a Christological/soteriological referent for χάρις, but there is no reason why this should be the case.

Under the hendiadys interpretation, Paul's apostleship is a gift from God. One tendency of this interpretation, however, is to disjoin this gift from Christology. Thus, Ehrensperger: "χάρις and ἀποστολή are intrinsically linked yet not because of the soteriological or christological content Paul attributes to χάρις but because this is how Paul perceives the service he is called to do—as a gift of God."[17] By contrast, the interpretations of Jewett and Schütz keep the Christological referent of grace in relation to Paul's apostleship, but they overload the phrase in Rom 1.5 and avoid taking into account Paul's other declarations that his apostleship was a gift. Consequently, my argument seeks to chart a course between the two above: Paul employed the concept of gift for

14 See e.g. Käsemann, *Romans*, 14; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 237; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 17; Zeller, *Charis*, 142; Wobbe, *Charis-Gedanke*, 73–74; F.J. Matera, *God's Saving Grace: A Pauline Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 20–22.

15 Jewett, *Romans*, 109.

16 J.H. Schütz, *Paul and The Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (Cambridge: CUP, 1975), 147. Cf. Nygren, *Romans*, 54–55.

17 K. Ehrensperger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power: Communication and Interaction in the Early Christ-Movement* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 91.

other gifts besides the Christ-event, his apostleship was one such gift, but the gift of his apostleship cannot be separated from the Christ-gift. Apostleship is an innately Christological gift: the reason that this apostleship exists is for the proclamation of the gospel among the Gentiles, to draw them into the Christ-event. The Christ-gift founds Paul's apostleship, and his apostleship is always directed to that gift. There is a coordination of divine gifts in Paul's thought, and we may distinguish between an explicitly or intrinsically Christological reference: Paul is not making the former here, but can hardly make anything but the latter, because his apostleship as gift exists only in relation to the Christ-event.

Paul states in 15.15 that he has written the community "in part to remind you," and he is doing so "on account of the grace given to me by God" (διὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ). The grace he received through Jesus is the grace given by God so that he might "be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles" (15.16).[18] Paul does not mention his apostleship explicitly, as in 1.5, but only the grace that sanctions his communication. The parallel expression in 12.3—"For I speak through the grace given to me" (λέγω γὰρ διὰ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι)—fills in this picture. Here Paul's claim to this particular χάρις grounds his authority to admonish the community.[19] Accordingly, Paul has "received grace and apostleship" to bring about the "obedience of faith among all of the Gentiles" (1.5); in view of the particular gift given to him, which is distinguished from the gift(s) received by all (12.6), he instructs the community (12.3); and this same gift is the reason why he is a minister to the Gentiles (15.15–16). It makes little sense to interpret χάρις in these passages as the Christ-gift, because this would provide Paul no more authority than those who received the letter would have; rather, it is his apostleship,[20] which is distinguishable, but not separable, from the Christ-gift.

Similarly, in 1 Cor 3.10 Paul declares that he has laid the church's foundation, which is Jesus Christ (3.11). This activity is "in accordance with the grace of God given to me" (κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι). Here again, χάρις cannot be exclusively or explicitly the Christ-event but Paul's apostleship, which provides the authority for such building. As Thiselton states, "Foundational

18 K. Kertelge, "Das Apostelamt des Paulus, sein Ursprung und seine Bedeutung," in *Grundthemen Paulinischer Theologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 29: "Die Betonung der Gnade . . . entspricht dem Grundcharakter seiner Verkündigung: Was der Christ ist, das ist er aus Gnade. Das gilt auch und in besonderer Weise für die ἀποστολή, die Paulus daher einfach als die ihm 'gegebene χάρις' bezeichnen kann."

19 On this text, see chapter 5.

20 Cf. Ehrensperger, *Dynamics of Power*, 89.

work is apostolic work in Paul."[21] In Galatians, Peter, James, and John give Paul the right hand of fellowship because they see "that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcision" (2.7) and perceive "the grace given to me" (γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι; 2.9). As de Boer notes, by "grace" Paul is referring not solely to his apostolic commission but also to his gospel for the Gentiles;[22] the two cannot be separated, because the latter is the content of Paul's apostolic proclamation (cf. 2.2).

To conceptualize how Paul's apostleship relates to the Christ-event, we may contrast two views. Schütz states: the "unrepeatable founding event is reflected in the new creation it inaugurates; but it is not repeated in [a] constitutive sense. Paul does not *repeat* what Christ has done. He *reflects* what Christ has done. In him the account of that action is made manifest."[23] Schütz's argument seems to be formulated in response to Bultmann, for whom a "merely 'reminiscent' historical account referring to what happened in the past cannot make the salvation-occurrence visible . . . the salvation-occurrence continues to take place in the proclamation of the word."[24] For Bultmann, it is key that Paul's apostolic work occurs in the *now time* of salvation (2 Cor 6.2). Thus, for Schütz Paul reflects the Christ-event, and for Bultmann Paul continues the salvation-occurrence.

Both views respect the fact that the Christ-event occurred in the past, but that present proclamation is how the gift is received—Schütz emphasizes the past, Bultmann the present—and that the two must be related. As Schütz argues, it is true that Paul does not *repeat* the Christ-event, as if it were repeatable; but if in the gift-event individuals die with Christ to live to God (e.g. Gal 2.18; Rom 6.3–5), then what happens through apostolic proclamation cannot be limited to *reflecting* the Christ-event. As Bultmann emphasizes, it is important to stress that the Christ-event does have its effect in the present: that the "now time" or the "but now" is truly the present, that Paul does not say, "but at that point in history." However, the concern with Bultmann's formulation is that it can disconnect the Christ-event from its particularity and singularity as an historical event. It does seem that the Christ-event as gift

21 A.C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 309. Cf. D.E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 114; R.B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 54; G.D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 137–138. *Contra* Best, "Apostolic Authority," 9.

22 M.C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 122.

23 Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 206.

24 Bultmann, *New Testament*, 302.

transcends time while being an event in time; that is, the event is not subject to typical metaphysical construals of events because it is a gift-event, the reception of which effects participation in the event.

The strength of Bultmann's formulation over Schütz's is that Schütz is speaking of the Christ-event, while Bultmann is speaking of the totality of God's salvific action, making the Christ-event and proclamation inseparable. As we will see below, Paul views his apostolic work as a constitutive element of God's work of reconciliation. It is not that Paul himself contributes to salvation per se, but that God's grace is at work in his apostolic activity whereby his proclamation is received not as the "word of humans" but as the "word of God" (1 Thess 2.13). Thus, with Bultmann, proclamation, in a sense, makes the past *present*, allowing the singular and particular event to invade the present and reconfigure the lives of its recipients.[25] But different from Bultmann, and with Schütz, I want to avoid the language of "continuing" by parsing the relationship between the elements of the "salvation-occurrence" carefully. Paul's apostolic proclamation is an act of embodying the Christ-event in the present: just as Paul received his apostolic commission through the revelation of Christ that occurred "in me" (ἐν ἐμοί; Gal 1.16), so he reveals Christ to the Gentiles through proclaiming the event that has transformed him (Gal 2.18–20; 3.1–5). Accordingly, where the Christ-event is the event in which Jesus became poor so that humans might become rich in his poverty (2 Cor 8.9), Paul understands apostles as "being poor but making many rich" (ὡς πτωχοὶ πολλοὺς δὲ πλουτίζοντες; 2 Cor 6.10). Indeed, God reveals through the apostles the "smell of the knowledge of Christ" in every place (2 Cor 2.14–15). Thus, the apostles are those sent "from God" to speak "before God in Christ" (ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν; 2 Cor 2.17). The apostle's work is therefore *patterned* after the Christ-event as indeed the apostle *reveals* the crucified and risen Christ:[26] there is a dialectic of embodiment and enactment, whereby the fact that Christ lives in Paul and is revealed in Paul (embodiment) makes possible the death and new life of those who hear and believe his proclamation (enactment).

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25 Cf. C. Landmesser, "Rudolf Bultmann als Paulusinterpret," *ZThK* 110 (2013): 20: "... so begegnet Jesus Christus nur in der christlichen Verkündigung, im christlichen Kerygma. Das für Paulus in Tod und Auferstehung des Christus sich manifestierende Heilshandeln Gottes werde nach Paulus im 'gepredigten Wort' vergegenwärtigt."

26 The basic sense of Käsemann's notion that "Christ is the prototype for the apostle" is provocative and, I think, a helpful description; this wording comes from D.V. Way, *The Lordship of Christ: Ernst Käsemann's Interpretation of Paul's Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 86, commenting on E. Käsemann, "Die Legitimität des Apostels: Eine Untersuchung zu II Korinther 10–13," *ZNW* 41 (1942): 33–71.

Ultimately, what Paul proclaims is that the Christ who died and was raised is the *living* Christ who is at work in believers through the Spirit: the historically singular event can be made effective in the present because, for Paul, Christ is alive and received in the gospel. The believer's life is "in Christ," shaped by the grace manifested in the subversive event of death and resurrection.

There is much more that could be said about apostolic proclamation, but to substantiate this argument, we turn to Galatians 1–2 and 1 Corinthians 15.1–11, where the issues of Paul's apostleship and proclamation, God's grace, and the incongruity of grace are to the fore.[27] For Paul there is a unity of grace: the grace he received is the grace at work in his life, and it is this grace that he proclaims.

2.2 *Unfitting Grace and Apostleship: Galatians 1–2*

As we saw in the last chapter, in Galatians Paul paints a picture of human sinfulness with broad strokes: humanity exists in "this present evil age" (1.4) and scripture has imprisoned all "under sin" (3.22). While Gentiles are "sinners by nature" (2.16), the imprisoning scripture is Jewish scripture, the law given to the Jewish people "on account of their transgressions" (3.19), which also lays a curse on those under it (3.10–14; 4.4–5). The Gentiles were previously enslaved to the "weak and impotent *stoicheia*," just like Jews were "enslaved under the *stoicheia* of the world" (4.3–4). Paul is part of this humanity, thus his use of first-person plurals: Jesus gave himself for *our* sins (ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν) to rescue *us* (ἡμᾶς; 1.4); Christ redeemed *us* (ἡμᾶς) by becoming a curse for *us* (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν; 3.13); *we* (ἡμεῖς) were enslaved (4.3); and Christ set *us* (ἡμᾶς) free (5.1). Paul's identification with sinful humanity constitutes him as unworthy of divine beneficence; but Paul also narrates his own story to portray concretely what it means to be an unfitting recipient of grace.[28]

In 1.13–14 Paul speaks about his "former way of life in Judaism."[29] This narrative depicts Paul's erstwhile ἀναστροφή with three imperfect verbs. Paul was 1) "excessively persecuting the church of God;" 2) "trying to destroy her;" and

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27 Cf. Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 84 on the centrality of these two texts for discussions of Paul's apostleship.

28 I am not claiming that Paul's "former life in Judaism" was simply an aspect of "this present evil age" which is marked by human agency, demonic powers, etc. Rather, Paul explains in 1.13–23 both that he had been set apart before birth *and* that he was unworthy of the Christ-gift.

29 It is common to understand ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ as Paul was speaking about Judaism as it self-defined itself during the Maccabean struggle; cf. e.g. Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 347–49. Yet, a few points relativize the significance of this argument: 1) Paul uses ἐν τῷ γένει μου to situate his advance ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ; 2) Paul's advance is according to a general standard

3) "advancing in Judaism" beyond his contemporaries due to his zeal.[30] These "three interrelated activities" were "all of them far removed from a willingness to receive the gospel or to learn it from another human being."[31] Paul's opposition to the church—the community that exists through reception of God's gift—is opposition to the gospel itself. Paul says as much in 1.23: the Judean churches heard that "the one who was formerly persecuting us now proclaims the faith (νῦν εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν) he was formerly trying to destroy." The "gospel proclaimed by me" was the object of Paul's attack.[32] This sets the context in which Paul receives the gift, and no one deserves to receive a gift one is seeking to destroy. Yet, for Paul, God's grace is grace precisely because it subverts common understandings of gift-giving by negating socio-cultural and religious norms, ethnicity, and "progress" as necessary means for being a fitting recipient. As one cursed and dead, unable to be made alive by Law—indeed, as one who was progressing in *opposing* grace—Paul received the justifying gift by faith, which re-creates the unworthy recipient. Apart from the old ways of measuring value—"neither circumcision, nor circumcision"—Paul now is καινὴ κτίσις (6.14–15).[33]

Consequently, we arrive at the question of whether Paul was "called" or "converted." The former stresses continuity: Paul was misguided but changed directions at the revelation of Christ from persecutor to proclaimer; the latter stresses discontinuity: Paul "changed religions" from Judaism to Christianity. The argument hinges largely on the interpretation of καλέω. Stendahl set the debate by arguing that in 1.15 Paul was purposefully echoing prophetic language and thus his experience must be interpreted as a calling to a vocation.[34]

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that should characterize all Jewish people ("ancestral traditions"); 3) Paul makes clear that neither Jewish nor Gentile ethnicity is a means of being worthy to receive grace.

30 On Paul's zealotry, see N.T. Wright, "Paul, Arabia, and Elijah (Galatians 1:17)," *JBL* 115 (1996): 683–86.

31 de Boer, *Galatians*, 85. On the relation of gospel and tradition, see M. Winger, "Tradition, Revelation and Gospel: A Study in Galatians," *JSNT* 1994 (1994): 65–86.

32 L.J. Lietaert Peerbolte, *Paul the Missionary* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 168 argues that Paul "presents himself here by means of the literary motif of the unworthiness of the one called." Cf. e.g. Judg 6.15; 1 Sam 9.21.

33 For an anthropological and *not* cosmological reading of 6.14–15, see M.V. Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul's Letters and Thought* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 222–29. Alternatively, see T.R. Jackson, *New Creation in Paul's Letters: A Study of the Historical and Social Setting of a Pauline Concept* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 83–114.

34 K. Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles—and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 7–22. Much of Stendahl's argument was an attempt to overcome a Protestant history of interpretation: "... we all, in the West ... cannot help reading Paul through the

Paul had always served the same God, who had set him apart before his birth for this particular task, and if we speak of Paul's conversion then we must also say the prophets were converted; since that is nonsense, we should not speak of Paul's conversion.[35]

Stendahl allows Paul's allusions to overshadow how καλέω functions in Paul's argument; Paul may structure his statements around the prophetic claims, but he is not reusing the accounts of Jeremiah and Isaiah.[36] According to Chester, who has provided an important rebuttal to Stendahl's argument,[37] the background for Paul's use of καλέω is the LXX designation of God as Creator; God is ὁ καλῶν τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα (Rom 4.17).[38] On these grounds, Chester questions the reliance on prophetic call narratives, noting that "there is a severe shortage of prophets who are themselves said to have been called."[39] Instead, Paul uses the prophetic language to stress "the quality of God's grace" and "the invincibility of God's purpose," which existed prior to Paul's birth and despite his persecuting activity.[40] Calling itself speaks to the "divine dimension of conversion" where the Creator God calls nonentities into existence—and some to particular purposes that are intrinsic to that creative work.[41]

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experience of persons like Luther or Calvin. And this is the chief reason for most of our misunderstandings of Paul." Luther was defined by despair at the thought of satisfying God, Paul by contrast was a "very happy and successful Jew" (12). S. Chester, "Paul and the Introspective Conscience of Martin Luther: The Impact of Luther's *Anfechtungen* on His Interpretation of Paul," *BibInt* 14 (2006): 508–36 has demonstrated that Stendahl's contention that Luther projected his guilt onto Paul is simply not true.

35 Stendahl, *Paul*, 10.

36 As S. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 156 notes, if Paul used the prophetic accounts stringently, it would imply that his calling was before he was born, which would undermine Stendahl's argument that calling refers to Paul's reception of a vocation.

37 See Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 59–112.

38 Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 64–70. Cf. Gaventa, "Calling-Into-Being," 255–69.

39 Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 158. Of course, in Isa 49.1, God "called my name from my mother's womb" (ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου ἐκάλεσεν). The question, however, is whether we should allow this to interpret the verse contrary to the interpretation necessitated by the connection between 1.6 and 15 and Paul's use of καλέω/χάρις.

40 Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 157–58. J.M.G. Barclay, "Paul's Story: Theology as Testimony," in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 139: "The reference to being 'set apart from my mother's womb' . . . echoes, of course, prophetic call narratives, but it also expresses . . . the conviction that God's fashioning of history is independent of the normal channels of human causation."

41 Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 85.

I will aim here to strengthen Chester's argument with two points: first, that Paul creates a rhetorical and theological identification with the Galatians through his use of καλέω and χάρις in 1.6 and 15: this relationship is decisive for construing Paul's experience (and the Galatians') rather than the prophets, who play an ancillary role.[42] Second, where Chester explains that calling language does not specify the event of calling itself,[43] I will argue that Paul modifies his calling language with "in grace" (1.6) for the Galatians and "through grace" (1.15) for himself to specify this event. Calling is primarily a matter of divine creation in the Christ-event, and for Paul, to a particular task.[44]

Paul's astonishment that the Galatians so promptly turned "from the one[45] who *called* you in *grace*" (ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς ἐν χάριτι [Χριστοῦ])[46] has a complement only nine verses later, in that Paul was "*called* through [God's] *grace*" (καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ).[47] Paul's phrasing is intentional: it creates an identification between the Galatians and Paul, an essential move for Paul's presentation of himself as a paradigm.[48] Yet, if καλέω means calling to a

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42 For a fuller version of this argument, see O. McFarland, "'The One Who Calls in Grace': Paul's Rhetorical and Theological Identification with the Galatians," *HBT* 35.2 (2013): 151–65.

43 Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 61. But note 109: Paul "appl[ies] the concept of calling to the event of coming to be in Christ."

44 Cf. Satake, "Apostolat und Gnade," 107: "Paulus sieht gerade in seiner Berufung zum Apostel seine Berufung zur Verheißung des Heils."

45 Cf. G. Ebeling, *The Truth of the Gospel: An Exposition of Galatians* (trans. D. Green; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 46: "Paul can omit the word 'God' because in his usage the participial ὁ καλέσας or ὁ καλῶν is a standard term for God (Rom 4:17; 9:12; Gal 1:15; 5:8; 1 Thess 2:12; 5:24). For Paul, 'calling' is a fundamental element of God's nature." Some older interpreters, such as Luther and Calvin, understood Christ as the subject of the calling; but to my knowledge, no modern interpreters seem to take this approach.

46 Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 227 n.61 argues that Χριστοῦ is the original reading: "it is hard to imagine the circumstances in which a scribe would have added 'Christ' . . . in a sentence where God is the acting subject." Yet, as J.B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (reprint; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 76 states, "the passage seems to gain in force by the omission." The manuscript evidence can allow for either reading; cf. B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 520–21.

47 Both Harrison, *Grace*, 277–78 and G.W. Hansen, "Paul's Conversion and His Ethic of Freedom in Galatians," in *The Road from Damascus: The Impact of Paul's Conversion of His Life, Thought, and Ministry* (ed. R.N. Longenecker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 213–14 rightly connect calling/grace in 1.6 and 15.

48 For this view, see Cf. G. Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1982); B.R. Gaventa, "Galatians 1 and 2: Autobiography as

vocation for Paul, it cannot mean this for the Galatians. The Galatians' calling is mentioned three times: they were "called in grace" (1.6), "called for freedom" (ἐπ᾽ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἐκλήθητε; 5.13; cf. 5.1), and the "persuasion" currently thwarting them from "obeying the truth" is "not from the one who calls you" (ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος; 5.8).[49] For the Galatians, calling is set in opposition to "turning . . . to another gospel" and slavery through law-observance. The Galatians are gentile sinners (2.15) whose lives before Christ were defined by serving false-gods (4.8–9). Yet, the Gentiles enter a story where the law has come to an end because of the Christ-event (2.18–20; 3.23–26).[50] Thus, the problem Paul addresses is that the Galatians are trying to return to that past, without recognizing that by participating in Christ's death and resurrection, they, too, have died to the Law.

Accordingly, what makes this turn—or *re*turn—to the Law problematic is the Galatians' calling *in grace*.[51] As we have seen, this phrase receives a more definite shape in 2.18–21.[52] Although Paul here speaks of the Christ-event's effect in the life of the "I", the Galatians are not excluded; rather, Paul includes them within the experience of the paradigmatic "I".[53] The Galatians had been called in grace and are therefore reconstituted through the death and resurrection of Christ as those for whom Law-observance is now soteriologically invalid. Every calling in grace is a co-crucifixion with Christ, a death through and to the Law. To turn from the "one who calls in grace" means "fleeing from

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Paradigm," *NovT* 28 (1986): 309–26; P.E. Koptak, "Rhetorical Identification in Paul's Autobiographical Narrative: Galatians 1.13–2.14," *JSNT* 40 (1990): 97–115; B.W. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 148–50; B.J. Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic "I": Personal Example as Literary Strategy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999); Barclay, "Paul's Story."

49 R.A. Bryant, *The Risen Crucified Christ in Galatians* (Atlanta: SBL, 2001), 196 speaks of a "rhetorical cord of the One who calls in the grace of Christ" that runs through Galatians.

50 Grindheim, "Not Salvation History," 106: "Paul's purpose is to show the Galatians that their own history means that their identity has changed."

51 As Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 228 notes, when ἐν is used with a verb of "calling" (e.g. 1 Thess 4.7; 1 Cor 1.15, 18, 20; etc.), it is always locative. Cf. Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 117: "ἐν is less causal than instrumental, less instrumental than locative, indicating the place 'where' the Galatian Christians were called by God and in which they, as those called, stand."

52 Cf. de Boer, *Galatians*, 40.

53 Cf. Gaventa, "Autobiography as Paradigm," 318; Barclay, "Paul's Story," 142; S. Schauf, "Galatians 2.20 in Context," *NTS* 52 (2006): 91; H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 122; B. Lategan, "Is Paul Defending His Apostleship in Galatians? The Function of Galatians 1.11–12 and 2.19–20 in the Development of Paul's Argument," *NTS* 34 (1988): 427–28; similarly, Hunn, "Christ Versus the Law," 547–48.

the sphere wrought by Christ's death, from the sphere of grace itself."[54] What does this mean for the interpretation of Paul's calling through grace?

Separating the concept of "calling" from the (admittedly loaded) term "conversion" makes our understanding of Paul's experience problematic; if Paul has died with Christ for the purpose of proclaiming the gospel—if he is a "new creation"—then neither "call" nor "conversion," as traditionally construed, adequately capture Paul's experience. As Chester has demonstrated, Paul's calling language includes the notions of call as creation and commission, with the latter dependent on the former. When we read that God called Paul "through his grace," this is not a timeless benevolence but the Christ-event.[55] Paul's calling is not a change of direction or reception of a new task,[56] but rather, as Badiou puts it, "a thunderbolt, a caesura . . . a conscription instituting a new subject." It is a happening that "mimics the founding event."[57] As Gaventa notes, "The reversal [Paul] describes in Chapter 1 finds another expression in [2.]19–20: Paul died to the Law and to his advancement in Judaism so that Christ might live within him (1:15–17)."[58] The "I" of 2.18–20 that has died to the law to live to God in Christ is, first and foremost, Paul, and "the death of the 'I' is the

54 Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 116. Also, 134: "Being called into grace is being called into the εὐαγγέλιον; that is the presupposition of 1:6."

55 *Pace* Eastman, *Significance of Grace*, 89, for whom the call is the "call to preach to the Gentiles" and God's grace stresses simply the graciousness of his divine commission; but cf. 111 n.24. Differently, Engberg-Pedersen, "Self-Sufficiency and Power," 129–30 argues that Gal 1.11–17 is concerned with the "imparting of knowledge," and therefore χάρις is the revelatory vision—new cognition—of Christ. Similarly, Crook, *Conversion*, 171.

56 Stendahl, *Paul*, 9. It is certainly not "a recall to a proper understanding of the grace-character of Israel's calling"; Dunn, *Galatians*, 63.

57 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 17. Besides the fact that participial tense-forms do not designate time, it is unlikely that καλέσας is contemporaneous with ἀφορίσας, designating a calling before Paul's birth. The parallel construction alone does not link ἀφορίσας and καλέσας temporally. Instead, καλέσας should be taken as parallel with ἀποκαλύψαι—especially since viewing καλέσας as a pre-natal summoning would run contrary to Paul's normal use of the term, the use of the term to describe the experience of the Galatians, and his normal use of the concept of grace. As K.O. Sandnes, *Paul—One of the Prophets? A Contribution to the Apostle's Self-Understanding* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 60 argues: "The call came by way of God revealing His Son to Paul. God's act of setting Paul apart 'from his mother's womb' is therefore an act prior to that." The reference to being set apart before birth stresses rather "the quality of God's grace, and the invincibility of God's purpose, which not even Paul's decision to persecute the church could deny or overcome" (Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 157).

58 Gaventa, "Autobiography as Paradigm," 318.

precursor to its reconstitution."[59] Thus, Paul is re-created "through grace" in order to receive the "grace" of proclaiming the Christ-event.

This disruption-by-revelation comes as a gift.[60] It is unsurprising, therefore, that here and in 2.7–9 Paul closely identifies gospel, grace, and apostleship, because they were indivisible in his life.[61]

Paul's use of χάρις in 2.7–9 "encompasses all of what Paul had received from God."[62] χάρις here is not so broad that it includes literally everything Paul had been given (e.g. 1 Cor 4.7); rather, χάρις denotes Paul's gospel and his apostleship, for Paul's apostleship is the vocational embodiment of the Christ-gift which is active in proclaiming the gospel. 2.7–9 contains a number of common terms that hark back to 1.15–16: εὐαγγελίζω in 1.16 and εὐαγγέλιον in 2.7, ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν in 1.16 and εἰς τὰ ἔθνη in 2.8–9, χάρις in 1.15 and 2.9, and the participial designations for God in 1.15 and 2.8. The overlap is significant in tying together the two passages in a stronger way than is sometimes argued. If 1.15–16 speak to Paul's reconstitution through the gift for the purpose of being an apostle, 2.7–9 elaborate further that Paul's apostleship and gospel exist to proclaim the gift; they are inextricable from the Christ-gift.

> 2.7: *ἰδόντες ὅτι πεπίστευμαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον* τῆς ἀκροβυστίας . . .
> 2.8: ὁ γὰρ ἐνεργήσας Πέτρῳ . . . ἐνήργησεν καὶ ἐμοὶ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη,
> 2.9: *γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν* μοι . . .

2.7 and 9 are in synonymous parallelism:[63] ἰδόντες and γνόντες overlap semantically, and the χάρις entrusted to Paul is τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας. Paul was "entrusted" (πεπίστευμαι) and grace was "given" (δοθεῖσαν), both divine passives that point to God's activity in 2.8.[64] Schütz argues against this reading,

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59 J.M.G. Barclay, "Grace and the Transformation of Agency in Christ," in *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders* (ed. F.E. Udoh et al.; Notre Dame: UND Press, 2008), 379.

60 Crook, *Conversion*, 249 claims that the "*why* of Paul's conversion has always vexed scholarship." Yet Crook's answer is that, in "the simplest terms possible, Paul converted because of a benefaction . . . he received in the vision," which seems to be what most other scholars have claimed, if in other terms.

61 Cf. F. Hahn, "Paul's Conception of Mission," in *Mission in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1965), 98.

62 Luther, *Lectures on Galatians*, 104. Cf. Zeller, *Charis*, 142.

63 Cf. de Boer, *Galatians*, 122.

64 It is typically argued that although Paul does not use ἀποστολή in 2.8 for himself as he does for Peter, the construction is elliptical and ἀποστολή is presupposed; cf. B.H. McLean, "Galatians 2.7–9 and the Recognition of Paul's Apostolic Status at the Jerusalem

stating that "[Paul] segregates the two ideas into separate participial phrases."[65] But this argument is not sound, because both participial phrases describe the Pillars' coming to a right understanding (perception, sight) of God's singular work in Paul. The parallelism of 2.7 and 9 results in viewing χάρις as the gospel for the uncircumcision—Paul's ἀποστολή.[66]

The progression of 2.7–9 also helps to understand what concepts are in view. In 2.7 Paul emphasizes unity: both Paul and Peter have been entrusted with the one gospel for Jews and Gentiles, because God worked in both apostles (2.8). The gift-language in 2.9 illuminates the nature of Paul's apostleship. Indeed, it is a paradoxical expression of Paul's gospel: the leaders of the church Paul was likely persecuting in his former life (1.13, 23) now perceive that this persecutor has received as a gift from God the vocation of taking abroad the message of the crucified and risen Messiah. Perception of the grace given to Paul is perception of the gospel that transformed Paul, which he now proclaims.

So why did Paul use χάρις in 2.9 rather than ἀποστολή? As Martyn states, χάρις

> summarizes what Paul knew to be at stake in the meeting (and what he sees to be now at stake in Galatia). The issue . . . was not whether there would be a mission to the Gentiles . . . The issue . . . was the fundamental character of that mission . . . Paul wants the Galatians to see, therefore, that the *presuppositionless character* of God's gracious good news in Christ was *the* issue at the conference.[67]

Thus, in Gal 1–2 Paul uses χάρις for the Christ-gift and for apostleship; both are unfitting gifts, and Paul stresses the inextricable relationship between participation in the event and apostolic proclamation of the event. God is at work in both and both stem from the same event. God calls and gives, but as an apostle Paul is intimately wrapped up in this divine gift-giving.

Conference: A Critique of G. Luedemann's Solution," *NTS* 37 (1991): 69. W.O. Walker, "Galatians 2:8 and the Question of Paul's Apostleship," *JBL* 123 (2004): 323–27, however, points out that 2.8 is not syntactically parallel to 2.7. Given the connection between gospel and apostleship and the focus on Paul's apostleship throughout Gal 1–2, the debate seems unimportant. Cf. F. Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief* (2nd ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1977), 116–17 n. 91.

65 Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 148.

66 *Contra* Best, "Apostolic Authority," 9.

67 Martyn, *Galatians*, 203–04.

Paul does not say that the Galatians are turning from the gospel to another gospel, but from the God who calls (1.6). As Schütz argues, "the one who called in grace" is identical with the gospel, but by putting the argument this way, Paul stresses that the "defection is not from Paul who preaches, but from God who calls."[68] This is a subtle move, for if God's calling is identical with the gospel, then God's calling is an implicit reference to Paul's proclamation.[69] But Paul here subordinates himself and all others who would preach to God's work in the gospel; the harm is not in departing from Paul, but from the God who calls. Yet it was *Paul* specifically who preached the gospel to the Galatians, and they had begun by the "hearing of faith" (3.1–4).[70] The gospel proclamation that creates faith through the Spirit designates the role Paul played in Galatia.[71] Through Paul's preaching the Galatians received the Christ-gift, that is, were called in grace—and thus co-crucified with Christ. There is a concursus between divine calling and human proclaiming.[72]

Paul's belief is that God called him in order to "reveal his son in me" (ἐν ἐμοί) so that he might proclaim him (1.16). As Fee states, "revelation . . . has taken place *in Paul* in such a way that both the gospel of Christ and Paul's apostleship should be visible to others as the revelation of the Son takes place in him."[73] This revelation of Jesus is interpreted precisely as the event of Paul's own co-crucifixion with Christ and new cruciform life in Christ to God (2.20). Thus, Hays argues that "Paul's twin affirmation that 'Christ lives in me' and that 'I live by . . . the faith of the Son of God' may be taken as a hermeneutical key"

68 Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 118. Cf. Ebeling, *Truth*, 46–47; differently Lategan, "Defending," 417–22.

69 As S.G. Eastman, *Recovering Paul's Mother Tongue: Language and Theology in Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 41 states, "the Galatians' calling is the fruit of God's revelation to Paul, and he himself was the human agent through which that gracious calling came." Cf. also the relationship between calling and proclaiming in 1 Thess 2.12–13.

70 For the various interpretive possibilities for this phrase, see de Boer, *Galatians*, 174–75; Williams, "The Hearing of Faith," 82–93. Cf., differently, Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 128–32.

71 Cf. G.D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 86: "Although it does not fit our logical schemes well, the Spirit is . . . both the cause and the effect of faith." See also E. Jüngel, *Justification: The Heart of the Christian Faith* (trans. J. Cayzer; London: T&T Clark, 2001), 251: "Believers come into being as recipients. Those who start to believe have already received . . . faith is always a receiving faith."

72 Cf. Winger, "Tradition," 81–82.

73 Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 221–22. Cf. Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 134–35: "'Revelation' is the anthropologically oriented event (grace-event) which functions as interpretation and appropriation of the 'sending' of the Son (4:4)."

for many odd statements in the letter;[74] construed this way, it is not surprising that Paul could say the Galatians received him as "angel of God, as Christ Jesus" (4.13–14) and could understand his suffering as bearing "the marks of Jesus in my own body" (6.17). Paul's person and proclamation are wrapped together, because Christ is revealed in both. Thus, Schütz: Paul "identifies gospel with apostle. He makes the apostle the paradigm of the gospel he proclaims. Both the message and the messenger proclaim grace and both embody grace, grace as event."[75]

Accordingly, in his letter, Paul's objective was to dissuade the Galatians from rebuilding what had been torn down (2.18) and to persuade them to recognize their new identities as those who have been "called into freedom." Paul thus states, "Become as I, for I also as you" (4.12): the Galatians should imitate Paul, because Paul has learned to subordinate all things—law-observance, ethnicity, gender, social standing—to his new identity in Christ.[76] Paul and the Galatians are united in the language of calling and grace: both were reconstituted as new creation in Christ, and Paul, in particular, was called to be the agent of the Galatians' calling.[77] Both have received the same unfitting gift, and Paul hopes to bring the Galatians back in line with that gift.

Three main themes circle inextricably here around the Christ-gift: incongruity, apostleship, proclamation. To every person the Christ-gift is incongruous; apostleship is the gift Paul receives for proclaiming the Christ-gift; and proclamation is the medium by which God's gift is received in the Spirit. The vocation of the unworthy apostle is inherent to the reception of the gift by his unworthy church, for proclamation is the enactment of the Christ-event in history by the Apostle who embodies the gospel.

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74 R.B. Hays, "Christology and Ethics in Galatians: The Law of Christ," *CBQ* 49 (1987): 281.

75 Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 134.

76 On this text, see esp. Eastman, *Paul's Mother Tongue*, 25–62. Cf. Gaventa, "Autobiography as Paradigm," 321; Hubbard, *New Creation*, 229: "Paul's rejection of 'circumcision' and 'uncircumcision' on the basis of his own Christocentric re-creation (2.20) provides the apostolic model which the Galatians are expected to embrace as their own." Also, Koptak, "Rhetorical Identification," 108.

77 Cf. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 83: "... one might point to that [apostolic] ministry as itself providing a vital human mediation of divine calling. By responding obediently to their own calling, the apostles make possible the calling of others." Chester notes that "apostleship is the only task in relation to which [Paul] uses the language of calling" (107). Cf. Satake, "Apostolat und Gnade," 100.

2.3 *Grace and Unfitting Apostleship: 1 Corinthians 15.1–11*

To repair the Corinthians' mistaken beliefs about the resurrection, in 15.1–11 Paul draws the Corinthians back into the basics of the gospel he proclaimed and they believed, which interprets the tradition that goes back to the very beginning of the movement.[78] As in Galatians, Paul roots his understanding of the gospel he proclaims in the event of incongruous grace that interrupted his life and has claimed theirs.[79]

The verb forms Paul uses in 15.1–2 are notable. Paul "makes known" (γνωρίζω) to the Corinthians the gospel he preached (εὐηγγελισάμην), to which the Corinthians are described as having a three-fold relationship. First, the Corinthians "received" (παρελάβετε) the gospel, the aorist tense likely referring to their hearing the gospel in the past. Second, it is the gospel "in which" the Corinthians stand (ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἑστήκατε). The perfect links to the aorist: the Corinthians heard the gospel, and it is the reality in which they stand from beginning to end. This phrasing parallels Rom 5.2, where believers stand "in this grace" (εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην ἐν ᾗ ἑστήκαμεν); such a parallel demonstrates the identification Paul makes between grace and gospel and the nature of hope as grounded in the acceptance of an unfitting gift. Third, the gospel is the power or event "through which" the Corinthians "are being saved" (δι' οὗ καὶ σῴζεσθε). As the Corinthians have stood in the gospel since they heard it, from now until the end the Corinthians should continue to do so; but they can also believe "in vain" (15.2). Accordingly, these verbs signify three aspects of one whole: the gospel's total claim on the person's existence. This gospel is what Paul preaches, and the preaching of the gospel sets loose the grace of God in the life of the hearer. Thus, in 15.1–2 Paul has laid out the relationship between the gospel he preached and the Corinthians' reception of that gospel; the reception of the gift cannot be split from its apostolic proclamation.

In 15.3–4 Paul sets forth a creedal formulation of the gospel tradition.[80] Paul connects the formulation to its historical manifestation in Jesus' appearances to the apostles in 15.5–7. Paul uses his position as the last person to whom Jesus appeared to explain the working of grace in his life and thus the grounds of his apostleship. This digression in 15.5–8 shows that all apostles—

78 Cf. Fee, *Corinthians*, 718.

79 K. Kertelge, "'Durch die Gnade Gottes bin Ich, was Ich bin' (1 Kor 15,10): Die Bekehrung des Apostels Paulus und der Heilsweg der Christen," in *Grundthemen Paulinischer Theologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 19: "Die Bekehrung ist für ihn die Berufung, und zwar Berufung zum Apostolat."

80 For a thorough study of the link between gospel and tradition in this text, see Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 84–113. Also, Winger, "Tradition."

including Paul—exist on the same level, for all have received the singular gospel to which all are subordinate. Thus, it matters not which apostle proclaims the gospel but that it is proclaimed and believed (15.11).

In relation to the other apostles, Paul is the least worthy to be an apostle; but in relation to the other apostles, Paul's apostolic activity far outstrips theirs. What makes sense of both sides of this statement is divine giving in a context of abject unworthiness. Paul describes the incongruity of the gift in ways that relate both to his life in general and to his apostleship in particular. Paul was ἔκτρωμα, a persecutor of the church, and thus οὐκ ἱκανός. The meaning of ἔκτρωμα is disputed, but a common interpretation is "miscarriage" or "abortion."[81] Premature death is the end of an abbreviated existence.[82] A passage in Philo provides an interesting parallel here. Interpreting Numbers 12.12, Philo states:

> But being in labor, it never gives birth. For the soul of the wicked person does not beget to bring to perfection anything fruitful. But whatever is brought forth is found to be premature and abortive (ἀμβλωθρίδια, ἐκτρώματα)... Therefore, Aaron... asks the divinely loved Moses to heal... Miriam, so that her soul might not give birth to evil things. Therefore, he says, 'Let her not become as equal to death, as an abortion (ἔκτρωμα) going forth from her mother's womb...'[83]

For the LXX translator, as for Philo and Paul, ἔκτρωμα implied death; and both Paul and Philo drew a correspondence between this understanding of metaphorical death with unworthiness.[84] As Schütz states, "Num 12:12 (LXX) preserves a peculiar nuance of the idea of death in the midst of life itself, or life in the midst of death."[85] Both Philo and Paul drew on this term to denote a

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81 Cf. H.W. Hollander and G.E. van der Hout, "The Apostle Calling Himself an Abortion: 1 Cor 15:8 Within the Context of 1 Cor. 15:8–10," *NovT* 38 (1996): 224–36. Differently, M.W. Mitchell, "Reexamining the 'Aborted Apostle': An Exploration of Paul's Self-Description in 1 Corinthians 15.8," *JSNT* 25 (2003): 469–85.

82 As M. Schaefer, "Paulus, 'Fehlgeburt' oder 'Unvernünftiger Kind'? Ein Interpretationsvorschlag zu 1Kor 15,8," *ZNW* 85 (1994): 208 states, "eine Fehl- *ist* eine Totgeburt. Sie stirbt bei oder vor ihrer 'Geburt.' " Note, however, that Schaefer prefers "Spätgeburt" based on an allusion to Hos 13.13. But the Hosea reference is weak, and "Spätgeburt" is lexically doubtful.

83 *Leg*. 1.76.

84 Cf. G. Dorival, ed., *Les Nombres* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1994), 305: "Philon développe une interprétation morale de notre verset."

85 Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 104.

particular state of being, which is deadness in life, immorality and unworthiness. The γάρ in 15.9 shows that the following phrases cannot be dislodged: the dead Paul is the "least of the apostles," is even "unworthy to be called an apostle," because he persecuted the church. The four parts of 15.8–9 are in parallel:

ἔσχατον δὲ πάντων ὡσπερεὶ τῷ ἐκτρώματι ὤφθη κἀμοί
Ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι ὁ ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων
ὃς οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς καλεῖσθαι ἀπόστολος
διότι ἐδίωξα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ

These verses paint a bleak picture of Paul's life and the insufficiencies of his apostolic qualifications into which God's grace enters in Christ's appearance. Paul is unfit to be an apostle because Paul is dead and Paul persecuted the church. As in Galatians, the solution to Paul's problem is a gift that reconstitutes Paul and commissions him to his apostleship.[86] Apostleship is the main emphasis here, but Paul's logic demands both re-creation and commission to work.[87] For Paul to be an apostle, God must address the fundamental problem of Paul's deadness, the sin that manifested itself in persecuting the church, by calling him as an act of creation.[88] "But by the grace of God I am what I am." As Barclay states, "'what I am' . . . can only be attributed to the grace of God."[89] By divine gifting Paul is an *apostle*; but Paul also is *alive*.[90] Paul's transformation from a miscarried persecutor of the church to its ἀπόστολος occurs through χάρις, Christ's dying and rising κατὰ τὰς γραφάς.[91]

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86 Cf., with differences, G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "An Ἔκτρωμα, Though Appointed from the Womb: Paul's Apostolic Self-Description in 1 Corinthians 15 and Galatians 1," *HTR* 79 (1986): 204.

87 Cf. Satake, "Apostolat und Gnade," 107: "Daß er zum Apostel berufen wird, heißt für ihn, daß ihm . . . die Verheißung des Heils gegeben wurde."

88 On calling language in 1 Cor, see Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 77–112 and Eastman, *Significance of Grace*, 37–38.

89 Barclay, "Transformation," 377.

90 Cf. Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 1211. O. Glombitza, "Gnade, das entscheidende Wort: Erwägungen zu 1. Kor. XV 1–11, eine exegetische Studie," *NovT* 2 (1958): 287: "Die benutzten Worte lassen erkennen, welches Gewicht dies Wort für Paulus hat: Es handelt sich um die neue Schöpfung, das neue Sein."

91 *Pace* Mitchell, "Reexamining," 485: "It would . . . be a mistake . . . to theologize this short reference into a sermon-like statement on God's bountiful grace towards an unworthy wretch, particularly when another equally plausible, less theologically and lexically burdensome explanation is available." Mitchell proposes that ἔκτρωμα refers to Paul's

Consequently, the passage necessarily includes both Paul's call to belief and call to apostleship; Paul could unlikely have distinguished them. Paul speaks of grace here in three related ways. First, "by the grace of God" Paul has his new existence as apostle, overcoming deadness in spite of unworthiness. Second, this grace that is "for me" (ἡ χάρις αὐτοῦ ἡ εἰς ἐμέ) works not in vain—rather, it has effects in his apostolic work.[92] Schütz notes the correspondence between verses 1–2 and 8–10: The Corinthians are saved by the gospel "if they *have not* believed in vain," and the grace of God which *came* to Paul "*has* not *been* in vain."[93] Likewise, as God's grace has not worked in vain *in Paul*, Paul states that those to whom "God gives . . . the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," which is victory over sin, death and the Law—"your labor is not *in vain* in the Lord" (15.56–58). As Chester states, "If their labour can be effective because Christ has given them victory over the power of sin that is the law, then presumably the same is also true of Paul."[94] That is, there is a double correspondence: for both their work is not in vain because of God's grace, and for both God's grace overcomes sin, death, law. Third, although Paul exists as an agent—the gift does not nullify the fact that Paul acts—Paul does not attribute his activity to himself but to "the grace of God with me" (ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ [ἡ] σὺν ἐμοί).[95] Paul exists and acts by and with the grace in him as the apostle who has labored

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discarded status among the apostles, though, among other difficulties, that would make what he says in 15.11 peculiar. Also, as Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 97 notes, if Paul were seeking to demonstrate his place among the apostles, "[w]hy should Paul use a phrase like τοῖς ἀποστόλοις πᾶσιν"? It is more problematic to remove ἔκτρωμα from the context of an argument where Paul calls himself unworthy and then describes the activity of God's grace in his life. Mitchell is concerned to avoid interpretations of ἔκτρωμα that extrapolate from its lexical meaning ("abortion") to something like "monstrous" or "wretched," which we need not do to see a description of Paul's lack of fit with divine grace. Furthermore, the temporal issue—that a miscarriage "is something that arrives before its appointed time, not after, and certainly not lastly" (477)—is only problematic if one coordinates ἔσχατον with ἔκτρωμα, which, again, is unnecessary. We do not need to read temporality into ἔκτρωμα; cf. P. von der Osten-Sacken, "Die Apologie des Paulinischen Apostolats in 1 Kor 15 1–11," *ZNW* 64 (1973): 250. Some commentators do not even view ἔσχατον chronologically; cf. e.g. R.F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 537.

92 *Contra* Best, "Apostolic Authority," 9. As noted by Nickelsburg, "Apostolic Self-Description," 202–203, this phrase in 15.10 echoes Isa 49.4.

93 Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 111.

94 Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 170.

95 See esp. Barclay, "Grace and Agency," 151. As Barclay notes, "Philo would have been dismayed to find that . . . the prepositions are inconsistent (εἰς ἐμέ. . . σὺν ἐμοί)." That is, Paul does not delineate precisely how God's grace is at work. See further Barclay, "Transformation," 378: "Paul seems to be anxious to insist that grace is . . . an agent within

harder than all of the other apostles. Yet it is not Paul's strenuous labor that overcomes his insufficiencies but God's gift in the revelation of Christ.[96]

Thus, in this text we see a number of themes also present in Galatians: Paul the unworthy recipient of the gift, the relation between apostleship and gift, and therefore the relation between grace, gospel, and proclamation. Paul received the gift given by God to unworthy individuals; and Paul now plays a role in that giving through his apostolic proclamation of the gospel.[97] Paul, Peter, or James could preach the gospel and the Corinthians receive the gift—the apostle is subordinate to the gospel—but the Corinthians received the gift through Paul's proclamation. The gift that gave life to Paul is what he preached and the Corinthians received.

2.4 *Conclusion: Gift and Apostleship, Paul as Paradigm and Proclaimer*

Paul's apostleship cannot be separated from the Christ-gift: Paul's apostleship exists only in relation to the gift, to proclaim the gift, and is therefore always directed towards it. Because of this inextricable relationship, apostleship is an unfitting gift: the Paul who becomes an apostle is the Paul who is crucified and made alive in the Christ-event. Divine gift exists and works within insufficiency and inability.

This thought is expressed most famously in 2 Cor 12.9. There Paul explains that a "thorn in the flesh was given to me" (ἐδόθη μοι) so that he might not exalt himself. Where Paul seeks the removal of weakness—and thus, power—the Lord responds, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power in weakness is made perfect." Grace is effective in weakness—not by removing weakness but by working through it. χάρις and δύναμις are paralleled, with the connecting γάρ showing that grace and power have to be interpreted together, because God's grace is his power at work in Paul's weakness. In 13.4 both weakness and power show up again as ways of speaking about participating in Christ's death and resurrection. Paul states that Christ is "not weak for you but is powerful in you." Even Christ was crucified ἐξ ἀσθενείας but lives by the power of God (ζῇ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ). The apostles therefore are weak in Christ but "will live with him

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his *ongoing* life, but the precise relationship between divine and human agency is hard to deduce." See further next chapter.

96 Cf. Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 99: "Paul specifically refuses to ground his ἱκανότης in the resurrection appearance given him . . . Paul does not regard his sufficiency as grounded in a resurrection appearance at all, but in the surpassing 'grace' of God manifested in his missionary labors."

97 Cf. Glombitza, "Gnade," 290: "Gnade ist das entscheidende Wort im Leben und im Werk dieses Mannes."

by the power of God" (ζήσομεν σὺν αὐτῷ ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ) for the Corinthians. As Schütz states, the "gospel itself is weakness and power, grounded as it is in the event of Christ. In his ministry Paul reflects this same weakness and power. Not only does he experience it alongside all Christians, he makes it visible in himself."[98] Weakness is identification with Christ's death in self-abnegation, foregoing the thought that one's own power is sufficient and relying on God's life-giving power in Christ.[99]

From his testimony of unworthiness, Paul formed his understanding of how God gives to all. Paul is the paradigm of every individual who receives the incongruous gift. Paul never states that his experience shaped this understanding,[100] but given that he tells his story as an example of what he sees happening with all, it seems likely that his own story is a key influence from which he gained his peculiar understanding of the nature of divine generosity. Thus, two main points about divine gift-giving converge in Paul's story: the gift is given to the unworthy and those who are unworthy receive it through the apostle. Paul's apostleship is a gift that proclaims the gift, and through his work God calls into existence communities of gift-recipients. I will turn to 2 Cor 5–6 now to examine further how apostolic proclamation relates to the reception of the gift.

3 Apostolic Proclamation and Reconciliation

In 2 Cor 6.1 Paul urges the Corinthians "not to receive the gift of God in vain" (μὴ εἰς κενὸν τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ δέξασθαι ὑμᾶς). Wrapped together indissolubly in 5.14–6.2 are explanations of this gift as Christ's death and resurrection (5.14–15), God's act of reconciliation in Christ (5.18–19, 21), and Paul's apostolic proclamation of this saving act (5.18–20; 6.1). Each of these aspects—christology, theology, proclamation—constitute this χάρις and how it should be received.[101]

98 Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 245.

99 Cf. P. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 572.

100 Some scholars view the core of Paul's theology as being nearly fully formed after Paul's Christophany; e.g., S. Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (2nd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984); M. Hengel and A.M. Schwemer, *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years* (Nashville: Westminster John Knox, 1997). While I do not substantially disagree, I believe A.F. Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: YUP, 1992), 70 is correct: "We shall never know Paul's experience. But we can see how Paul reconstructs it."

101 Cf. O. Hofius, "'Gott hat unter uns aufgerichtet das Wort von der Versöhnung' (2 Kor 5,19)," *ZNW* 71 (1980): 19: "Beide Momente—Versöhnungstat und Versöhnungswort—

In 5.14–15 Paul states that Christ's love (ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ) controls us, because Paul has discerned "that one died for all, therefore all died" (εἷς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον). Christ died for all "so that those who live might no longer live to themselves but to the one who died for them and was raised" (τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγερθέντι). Parallel to Gal 2.19, dying with Christ enables one to live to another. As Barnett states, there is a "double dying"—the one died that all might live, all die to themselves to live to Christ.[102]

In 5.16–17 Paul draws epistemological conclusions from 5.14–15. The νῦν of 5.16 correlates with the νῦν of 6.2, designating the time created by the Christ-event,[103] whereby those "in Christ" are καινὴ κτίσις.[104] As Martyn states, 5.16–17 "establish an inextricable connexion between eschatology and epistemology" that is grounded in Christ's death and resurrection (5.14–15).[105] Those who are living in the "day of salvation" know others through the cross rather than the flesh. Accordingly, in 5.14–15 and 5.16–17, Paul explains that the Christ-event effects the death and new life of the person,[106] thus also killing off the old way of knowing and creating a new epistemology in Christ. After this rupture in history, believers should have a different way of interpreting all reality that corresponds to the reality of their new existence.

In 5.18–19 the God from whom all things exist (τὰ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ)—both τὰ ἀρχαῖα and τὰ καινά—as creator and redeemer is now defined with a number of participles:

ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ
(1) τοῦ *καταλλάξαντος* ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ
καὶ
(2) *δόντος* ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς
(1a) ὡς ὅτι θεὸς *ἦν* ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον *καταλλάσσων* ἑαυτῷ,
μὴ *λογιζόμενος* αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν
(2a) καὶ *θέμενος* ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς

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sind in ihrem differenzierten Zusammenhang das eine Heilsgeschehen der rettenden Zuwendung Gottes zu dem der Sünde verfallenen, gottfeindlichen Menschen."

102 Barnett, *Corinthians*, 291.

103 Cf. Rom 3.21, 26; 5.6; 9.9, etc.

104 On "new creation" here, see esp. Hubbard, *New Creation*, 177–83.

105 J.L. Martyn, "Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages," in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 92. Cf. Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 197.

106 Cf. R.H. Bell, "Sacrifice and Christology in Paul," *JTS* 53 (2002): 9: "By participating through faith in Christ's death and resurrection, the believer is made a new creation."

God is identified by two main acts with aorist participles, with two further explanations. First, God reconciles himself to "us"—Paul and, in light of the following verse, the Corinthians—and, more expansively, to the world.[107] God's reconciling work is cosmic in scope yet individually so.[108] Insofar as God has reconciled "us" to himself, he has done this by "not reckoning to them their trespasses" (μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν; cf. 5.21; Rom 4.3–8). Paul uses two prepositions (διά, ἐν) to convey Christ's role in this reconciliation, which is more fully explained in 5.21. The phrase διὰ Χριστοῦ is interpretable as "through Christ's death and resurrection" (5.14–15),[109] showing that God reconciled himself to us through the Christ-event by which humans die to themselves to live anew.[110]

The phrase θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ is predictably much debated about how it should be translated and what its theological weight is. For example, Barnett thinks "in Christ" is functionally equivalent to "through Christ," thus clarifying that reconciliation occurs in the Christ-event.[111] Martin and Lambrecht make stronger claims that this verse speaks of God's becoming in Christ "one of our human race"[112] and "God's presence in Christ."[113] Christ is the locus of God's reconciling activity, making an inextricable connection between God's salvific act and the being of Christ.[114] The ἐν Χριστῷ intensifies διὰ Χριστοῦ just as reconciling the κόσμος deepens reconciling ἡμᾶς. Bell has shown that the interpretation "God was in Christ—reconciling the world to himself" is grammatically

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107 Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and The Trinity*, 1: "In establishing the world in relationship to Godself, God's intent is to communicate . . . gifts to us." M.E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians: I–VII* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 434 takes κόσμος to refer to the "human world" with no broader cosmic connotations, because she thinks the pronouns in 5.19 further define the term. Similarly, Hubbard, *New Creation*, 181; Hofius, "Versöhnung," 8. By contrast, Jackson, *New Creation*, 136–47.

108 For an overview on reconciliation in scholarship, see C. Constantineanu, *The Social Significance of Reconciliation in Paul's Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 25–42.

109 Hofius, "Versöhnung," 5.

110 As Breytenbach, *Grace*, 171 notes, the use of καταλλάσσω "to denote a change in the relationship between humans and God" is "so rare that it can safely be regarded as a metaphorical mapping of non-religious terminology onto a religious domain."

111 Barnett, *Corinthians*, 306. Cf. Eastman, *Significance of Grace*, 40.

112 R.P. Martin, *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1981), 99.

113 J. Lambrecht, "'Reconcile Yourselves . . . ': A Reading of 2 Cor. 5,11–21," in *The Diakonia of the Spirit* (*2 Cor 4:7–7:4*) (ed. L. de Lorenzi; Rome, 1989), 184.

114 Cf. Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 198. *Pace* Eastman, *Significance of Grace*, 40, this view does not stress revelation to the neglect of the passage's soteriological concerns.

preferable and theologically coherent within Paul's letters.[115] It shows that "Soteriology depends on Christology."[116]

The argument climaxes in the independent statement in 5.21. The "not reckoning" of 5.19 finds its counterpart in God's making Christ sin so that "we might become the righteousness of God in him."[117] There have been two main ways of interpreting Christ's being made sin: 1) understanding ἁμαρτία through Rom 8.3, as a "sin-offering;[118] or 2) as Christ's identifying with sinful humans. Most commentators note that since Paul does not use περὶ ἁμαρτίας and ἁμαρτία parallels δικαιοσύνη, the first interpretation is ruled out.[119] Rather, Paul explains in 5.21 that in "some unfathomable way Christ is identified with what is opposed to God."[120] Christ identified with humanity by exchanging sinlessness for sinfulness—"for us."[121] And one "becomes the righteousness of God" in Christ

115 Bell, "Sacrifice and Christology," 11. Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 196: "here we find plainly expressed what we must recognize as presuppositional elsewhere: *who* it is who dies for us is absolutely crucial." As R.W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology: Volume 1, The Triune God* (Oxford: OUP, 1997), 185 notes, the NT does not give a "theoretically developed answer" of how God's reconciling in Christ *works*; rather, "[*t*]*hat* it works is assumed from the Old Testament."

116 Cf. the parallel in Col 1.19 and 2.9.

117 The reading of N.T. Wright, "On Becoming the Righteousness of God: 2 Corinthians 5:21," in *Pauline Theology, Volume II* (ed. D.M. Hay; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 200–08, that the phrase means to "become God's covenant faithfulness," seems strained. First, the parallel between 5.17a and 21 (as noted by Hubbard, *New Creation*, 178) suggests a soteriological interpretation (however construed), as well as the explicatory relation between 5.19 and 21. Second, Wright's argument works only if ἁμαρτία is understood as "sin-offering," which seems implausible. And on this point, Wright's argument is circular: he uses the "sin-offering" reading to support his argument, which then supports his understanding of ἁμαρτία. Third, he must restrict the pronouns in 5.21 to refer to Paul (and other apostles) rather than the Corinthians as well. Fourth, Wright's argument relies on asserting that the traditional reading views 5.14–15, 17, 21 as detached statements, as "mere snippets of traditional soteriology" (205); "[t]his verse is not an abstract, detached statement of atonement theology." We do not have to find a specific reference to Paul's apostleship in 5.21 to establish that 5.14–21 is important for Paul's understanding of his apostleship; indeed, the interwoven nature of Paul's understanding of reconciliation and apostleship lays the grounds for his appeals to the Corinthians.

118 Cf. R.P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (Dallas: Word, 1986), 157.

119 Cf. e.g. Thrall, *2 Corinthians I–VII*, 440–441; Bell, "Sacrifice and Christology," 13.

120 M.D. Hooker, "Interchange in Christ," *JTS* 22 (1971): 353.

121 Thrall, *2 Corinthians I–VII*, 444 argues that the interpretation of "interchange" (Hooker) is correct but eschews "imputation" because she says the exchange happens "in Christ"—therefore, it is not an "alien righteousness." This displays a misunderstanding of how imputation works for Reformation theologians, for whom the imputation of Christ's

through reception of the gift.[122] Thus, God reconciles humanity to himself by giving Jesus to be sin for humanity, who in turn become righteous; the basis of reconciliation, then, is the gift of righteousness in Christ, which is nothing other than an unfitting gift.[123] The gift is given to, and is purposed specifically for, sinners.

Interpreters are correct, of course, to note that 5.21 is a uniquely worded statement; but it is not substantially different from what Paul says elsewhere, as we have seen. Sinful humans are justified in the revelation of God's righteousness in the Christ-event (Rom 3.21–24); they are therefore righteous (cf. also Gal 2.16–21).[124] Sinful humans receive the gift of righteousness and thus will reign in life, just as Christ's righteous act leads to the justification of life (Rom 5.15–19). Paul's gift-righteousness language is flexible, and 2 Cor 5.21 fits perfectly: God, in the Christ-event, gives to unworthy humans, who through—and only through—the gift, are righteous *in Christ* (cf. also Phil 3.10).[125] God justifies sinners in Christ; in Christ sinners become the righteousness of God.

Paul's depiction of God's reconciling activity sits strikingly alongside Philo's understanding of reconciliation with God. In *Praem*. 162–171, Philo has concluded his discussion of the "curses and punishments" which those who disobey the "Laws of righteousness and piety" justly receive (ἄξιον). Yet if these people change their minds, reproach their deceitful selves, confess their sin, and purify their tongues, *then* they will receive the goodwill of "God the merciful savior" (τοῦ σωτῆρος καὶ ἵλεω θεοῦ). Turning to virtue, these people are guided by a vision more divine than human by which they may be reconciled to God (πρὸς τὸν πατέρα καταλλαγῶν).[126] However, the enemies of the repentant will "receive the wages of their cruelty" (κομίζεσθαι τὰ ἐπίχειρα τῆς ὠμότητος) in curses. To summarize the logic of this passage sharply: repenting precedes reconciliation, which precedes receiving gifts from God. In other words, God gives to those who are worthy, virtuous. As Breytenbach notes, for Philo, if anyone

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righteousness could never be split from union with Christ. Cf., e.g., Chester, "It Is No Longer I," 315–37.

122 As Hooker, "Interchange," 353 notes, this "exchange" is not straightforward: Christ becomes sin, humans become righteousness *in Christ*.

123 Cf. similarly Zeller, *Charis*, 153.

124 Cf. Jüngel, *Justification*, 80: "the biblical expression 'God's righteousness' speaks of an event on the basis of which ungodly humanity can live together with God. This presupposes God's *coming*, with his righteousness, *into* the context, the *real life* context, of human beings—in Jesus Christ."

125 Cf. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, 365.

126 While God does not initiate reconciliation with the ungodly, this divine or semi-divine vision still draws humans to God.

is a reconciler, it is Moses who reconciles the sinful people to God, not God reconciling himself to sinful people.[127] With scriptural warrant, Philo explains that Moses as "mediator and reconciler" (μεσίτης καὶ διαλλακτής) supplicates and prays for God to forgive the sins of the people.[128] Thus, for Philo "the mediator attempts to change God after the people have repented. In Paul's case the hostile enemies are reconciled."[129] Both Paul and Philo stress God's mercy, but differently so. For Philo, God does not reconcile himself to sinners, just as he does not give gifts to them; the two phenomena are intimately related. For Paul, God reconciles sinners by giving an unfitting gift.

Yet how is this gift received? This question points to the second major aspect of 5.18–20: apostolic proclamation. As Barnett states, "God's 'gift' of a 'ministry (*diakonia*) of reconciliation,' to whom he has entrusted his 'word of reconciliation,' must be seen as part of God's gift to the world and to history."[130] God achieved reconciliation in Christ just as God "gave to us the ministry of reconciliation" (δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς; 5.18).[131] Paul is reconciled and receives the vocation of being a "minister" of that reconciliation for others.[132] Likewise, God is identified as the one who reconciles in Christ by not reckoning trespasses and who "placed in us the word of reconciliation" (θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς; 5.19).[133] The parallel "*Tat-* und *Wort-*Aspekt"[134] of 5.18–19 is significant for exhibiting how the divine act of reconciliation is made effective in the lives of people in history through the act of proclamation. To borrow from Bultmann, the "word which makes this proclamation is itself a part of this event."[135] Thus, God reconciles in Christ and Paul is the minister of this reconciliation, appointed to proclaim the saving event. The inseparable pairing of reconciliation with apostolic proclamation

127 *Mos*. 2.166.

128 Cf. *Spec*. 2.196.

129 Breytenbach, *Grace*, 179.

130 Barnett, *Corinthians*, 300.

131 As Porter, "Paul's Concept of Reconciliation," 136–41 argues, the participial tense-forms in 5.18–19 do not "index" past and present actions; thus, one cannot argue for a straightforward reference to Paul's Christophany. *Pace* S. Kim, "2 Cor. 5:11–21 and the Origin of Paul's Concept of 'Reconciliation'," *NovT* 39 (1997): 360–84.

132 Cf. S.J. Kraftchick, "Death in Us, Life in You: The Apostolic Medium," in *Pauline Theology, Volume II*, 167: "the shape of [Paul's] ministry is defined by its founding event, and God's appeal for reconciliation is extended through this ministry."

133 On possible LXX backgrounds to this phrase (e.g. Ps 77.5; 104.27), see Hofius, "Versöhnung," 10–18.

134 Hofius, "Versöhnung," 6.

135 Bultmann, *New Testament*, 306.

in 5.18–19 grounds Paul's appeal in 5.20: Paul's apostolic ministry is included within the "scope of the divine work," and it is on this basis that Paul appeals to the Corinthians as God's "co-worker" (συνεργέω; 6.1).[136]

There are three parts to Paul's appeal.[137] First, Paul claims authoritative standing as one who serves ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ. Paul uses the political term πρεσβεύω to describe apostolic activity.[138] Paul and the other apostles serve as ambassadors on behalf of and in the place of Christ: to "ignore Paul at this point would have been to ignore the Christ on whose behalf he spoke."[139] Second, Paul states that God speaks through him: he serves as "God appeals through us" (ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν). The correspondence of God and Christ here is significant: Paul serves on behalf of Christ, while God speaks through him. "Christ is thus extended through his ambassadors."[140] Consequently, third, Paul appeals to the Corinthians: "Be reconciled to God." Being reconciled to God means being reconciled by the God who reconciles;[141] the parallel between 5.20 and Rom 5.11 where reconciliation is "received" (τὴν καταλλαγὴν ἐλάβομεν) through Christ points to the gift-nature of the divine passive in 2 Cor 5.20. Reconciliation is a gift.[142] Thus, the ministry (διακονία) and word of reconciliation (ὁ λόγος τῆς καταλλαγῆς) are both present, where that ministry is active in speaking reconciliation, proclaiming what God has done in Christ and appealing for believers not to forsake this gift. Paul's apostolic activity and the Christ-gift proceed from the same divine Giver, who is at work in both gifts such that neither can be separated from the other.[143] Yet the apostolic

136 Thrall, *2 Corinthians I–VII*, 436.

137 Cf. Barnett, *Corinthians*, 309.

138 Philo uses πρεσβεύω in similar ways; see, e.g., *Plant*. 14 (angels); *Her*. 205–06 (Logos); for political uses, see *Flacc*. 105; *Legat*. 192, 240, 242, 302. On Paul's ambassadorial language, see esp. Breytenbach, *Grace*, chap. 8 and A. Bash, *Ambassadors for Christ: An Exploration of Ambassadorial Language in the New Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 1–80.

139 Barnett, *Corinthians*, 310.

140 Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 181.

141 This is not to claim that humans are *merely* passive—Paul is appealing to them to do something, of course—but that the stress of this verb is receptivity. However, for a discussion of the different translation possibilities, and an argument for a reflexive meaning, see R. Bieringer, "'Reconcile Yourselves to God.' An Unusual Interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5:20 in Its Context," in *Jesus, Paul, and Early Christianity: Studies in Honour of Henk Jan de Jonge* (ed. R. Buitenwerf, H.W. Hollander, and J. Tromp; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 11–38.

142 Cf. Constantineanu, *Reconciliation*, 71: "Reconciliation has grace as its starting point."

143 Thus, we might say with Hofius, "Versöhnung," 19 that "als 'Versöhnung' beschriebene Heilshandeln Gottes in Jesus Christus schließt demnach für Paulus *zwei* konstitutive Momente in sich."

work does not end with the reception of the gift, as Paul's letters make clear. As their apostle, Paul labors in the hopes that the Corinthians receive this gift rightly, such that they live in line with it until the end. Paul seeks a congruence between the event, Paul's proclamation, and the Corinthians' life.

Importantly, the Corinthians have already received this gift: Paul urges them not to receive the gift, but not to receive it "in vain" (εἰς κενὸν τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ δέξασθαι ὑμᾶς). As Barnett states, "the 'grace of God' is Paul's terse caption for the grand vista that he has just painted portraying God's eschatological salvation by which God reconciled the guilty to himself through the death of the Innocent One."[144] In 6.2 Paul quotes Isaiah 49.8 and applies it to the present context, explaining that in the Christ-event a new καιρός has been inaugurated, a "day of salvation."[145] For the Corinthians living in this "now time," the decision is whether they will receive the gift and live in a way consonant with the gift: living not to themselves but to Christ (5.15), perceiving all reality from the new vantage-point from the cross, the site of God's cosmic reconciliation (5.16–17), and therefore being reconciled with God (5.20). Intrinsic to the reception and living out of this gift is the apostle whose charge is the preaching and ministering of the word of reconciliation. Paul is Christ's ambassador to the Corinthians, and in this case, without Paul there is no gift, for the apostle is the divinely chosen agent of God's beneficence. Paul is fundamental to what it means to speak about divine gift: to reject God's gift of Christ—or to receive it in vain—is to reject both God and apostle.[146]

4 Paul and Philo

4.1 *Paul and Philo, Unfitting and Fitting Grace*

We have returned repeatedly to the issue of the relation between grace and worth, and we can now summarize our conclusions. Philo believes humans can be worthy to receive gifts from God, and God gives to the worthy; Paul believes humans cannot be worthy to receive the gift from God, and God gives to the unworthy. While it is tempting to leave the comparison as a stark antithesis, my basic argument has been that Paul and Philo are not identical but they

144 Barnett, *Corinthians*, 316.

145 Cf. Bultmann, *New Testament*, 307: "... the proclaimer, the apostle ... belongs to the eschatological occurrence."

146 Cf. B.R. Gaventa, "Apostle and Church in 2 Corinthians: A Response to David M. Hay and Steven J. Kraftchick," in *Pauline Theology, Volume II*, 195–96; J.M. Gundry, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying In and Falling Away* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), 278–79.

are also not simply antithetical. We need to ask how grace functions in relation to worth and why God gives. For both Philo and Paul, divine giving is explicable only by the character of God. Philo traces everything back to divine causation, and human worth must be understood in that context; Paul points to the utter unworthiness of humans because God is the one who gave Jesus to defeat sin and death.

4.1.1 Adam and the "Human Problem"

Philo states that Adam was originally created without virtue or vice but allowed himself, with Eve and the Serpent, to fall into vice.[147] Adam and Eve preferred a "brief and mortal—not *life*—but time of wickedness" (οὐ βίον ἀλλὰ χρόνον κακοδαιμονίας); consequently, God set for them their due punishment.[148] "When evil began to flourish more than virtue," Philo states that "the everlasting fountains of God's graces were held back" (αἱ ἀέναοι πηγαὶ τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ χαρίτων ἐπεσχέθησαν) in the present time (νυνὶ δέ—!) so that they might not supply the unworthy (ἵνα μὴ ὡς ἀναξίοις χορηγῶσιν).[149] Thus, Adam *introduces* the possibility of human *unworthiness*.[150] Paul's story is less nuanced: "death came through man" and "in Adam all die" (ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν; 1 Cor 15.21–22). As Paul emphatically maintains in Rom 5.12–21, Adam introduced sin, and therefore death, to all people, because of his disobedience. Because of Adam, all stand under God's judgment. Thus, Adam *obliterates* the possibility of human *worthiness*.

4.1.2 Worth as Cause and Condition

For Paul, because no human is worthy, nothing inherent to humans can cause God's giving or be its condition. God gives because God is inexplicably merciful and loving towards the undeserving. Thus, God gives an unconditioned gift: it does not require that standards—moral, ethnic, or social—be met by its recipients to receive it. Likewise, for Philo human worth does not cause God to give: God gives because his nature is gracious and abundant, and only God is Cause. Both Philo and Paul believe in a "free" gift in that God gives without being coerced or prompted; God is sovereign and cannot be forced to act by humans. Yet, for Philo worth becomes a condition of giving: God's generosity is like an overflowing fountain, and human worth provides the proper direction

147 See chapter 2, sections 3.1–2. *Leg*. 2.53.

148 *Opif*. 156.

149 *Opif*. 168.

150 As Philo acknowledges, humans can choose good or bad, but often choose the latter; *Conf*. 178.

to the flow of gifts.[151] In a sense, human worth is magnetic: it attracts God's gifts for their fitting use, while the unworthy repel gifts through rejection or misuse. "God rejoices in giving," Philo states, "whenever they who receive are worthy of the gift" (διδοὺς γάρ, ὅταν ἄξιοι χάριτος ὦσιν οἱ λαμβάνοντες, εὐφραίνεται).[152] Accordingly, human worth is never a cause for giving—God gives because God is a giver—but for Philo it is a condition. If human worth were not a condition for Philo, God would be irrational and morally questionable; if human worth were a condition for Paul, then God could not give. Thus, both have their own ways of placing the cause of divine giving outside of humanity.

4.1.3 The Asymmetry of Divine Giving

Since neither Philo nor Paul makes worth a cause of divine giving, they both also stress in their own ways the asymmetry of the divine-human relationship. Asymmetry is seen in the priority of divine giving, though each nuances this differently. Paul stresses the asymmetry of human unworthiness; Philo stresses asymmetry as a product of God's perfection.[153] What is important is that for both this divine asymmetry restricts the importance of worth in the equation of divine giving. Paul, of course, does this by insisting straightforwardly that no one is worthy. Philo's underlining of human worth is relativized—or properly contextualized—by his stringent belief in divine omni-causality and the wide umbrella of generosity (everything is gift). Divine giving always stands behind and constitutes human worth; that is, Philo insists that the constitution of worth cannot be considered outside of the ambit of divine generosity itself. God creates the virtues and causes them to grow, gives humans their natures, provides direction through the Logos—in short, God causes all good things.[154] Thus, when Philo asks why Noah or Abraham found favor before God, it is because God created their virtuous nature.[155] In essence, then, when Philo asks why a human is worthy to receive gifts, he points to God.[156] For both Philo and Paul, humans are always in need of divine grace.

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151 For this imagery, see e.g. *Cher*. 86; *Ebr*. 31–32. Similarly, *Post*. 143–45.

152 *Somn*. 2.175–77.

153 Chapter 1, section 3.2. For a general statement of God's superiority to humanity in gift-giving, see *Spec*. 1.43–44. Cf. also Zeller, *Charis*, 21: "Die Gunst dagegen kommt aus der hohen Stellung dessen, der nichts bedarf."

154 Cf. *Opif*. 75; *Mut*. 31. For virtue, see *Leg*. 3.10 and the other texts in chapter 2, section 3.1.

155 Cf. *Leg*. 3.77–78, 83–84, 104. See also *Abr*. 54 for the patriarchs as soul-types gifted to individuals.

156 See esp. *Leg*. 3.136; *Post*. 154–57; *Det*. 114.

4.1.4 The Content and Function of Divine Gifts

All of these subtopics are related to two questions: what is grace and what does it do? For Philo, grace is *cosmological* and *causative*. "Why did he create that which did not exist? Because he was good and loves to give" (ὅτι ἀγαθὸς καὶ φιλόδωρος ἦν).[157] God's paradigmatic act of giving is the creation of a well-ordered world as God's fundamental gift is the cosmos;[158] the purpose of all successive gifts is to bring the recipient into step with the structures of the cosmos (Law, Logos),[159] so that one becomes virtuous and ascends to the *visio Dei*. Since God has created all things, he owns all things; and therefore everything is gift.[160] A person's worth is constituted by how well they use God's gifts to live in accordance with the first gift. In the act of creation, all are granted a baseline of gifted existence and capabilities, yet not all properly appropriate that existence and direct it towards God.[161] The worthy—those who are progressing—have God as their guide to virtue and thus disregard their own abilities, knowing that God's gifting enables their progress. Yet Philo has no anxieties over the junction of divine and human agency in the construction of worth, because human agency that produces virtue exists within the domain of divine causation. Again, God is the source and cause of all things—everything, even human worth and virtuous actions must be attributed to God.[162] Thus, those who live virtuously through use of reason receive good things; but those who do good things only do so through divine gifting and empowerment. To speak of human agency in relation to worth is to point back to divine gifting, for grace causes one to move towards cosmos and God. Consequently, it is not simply worth that makes one worthy to receive from God; rather, in part, it is the recognition that worth itself is caused by God, and thus being worthy, while being a condition for the reception of gifts, is never one's own accomplishment.[163] Worth does not preclude one's accomplishments, but rather they exist concurrently, in the asymmetrical relation of divine causation. Worth and virtue precede receiving from God, but God's

157 *Mut*. 46.

158 Cf. e.g. *Ebr*. 117–19, *Deus* 106–08, *Leg*. 3.78, *Mut*. 46, *Somn*. 1.243.

159 Chapter 2, sections 2.2–3.

160 *Her*. 102–03.

161 *Leg*. 1.34. Cf. *Mut*. 225; *Opif*. 23.

162 Indeed, not even one's body can be considered one's own possession; cf. e.g. *Cher*. 117–19; *Sacr*. 97.

163 Cf. *Sacr*. 54–57; *Her*. 33; *Congr*. 130.

implanting virtue within the soul and arousing it towards perfection precede being virtuous. Grace *causes* grace.[164]

For Paul, grace is *Christological* and *creative*. God's grace is manifested supremely in the Christ-event, by and in which humans are re-created from death to new life. Worth is not the presupposition of divine giving because God gives specifically to the unworthy, who are unable to honor God. Thus, God gives an unfitting gift without thought for ethnicity, social standing, or morality. Since Paul believes that God gives to the unworthy, he removes human agency from the question of receiving the Christ-gift. Accordingly, God justifies the ungodly apart from works (Rom 4.4–8), elects before one has done good or bad (Rom 9.11), and gives to Gentiles without the Law as to Jews with the Law. The question of why God gives is never directed at the gift-recipients except to point out their status as ungodly or sinful (e.g. Rom 5.6–8; 2 Cor 5.21; Gal 1.4). Since the recipients are ungodly and unrighteous, it is impossible to conceive of them doing or being anything that could create or increase their fit with divine gifts. Unlike Philo, Paul never traces the logic of God's giving to something an individual has done or will do. Thus, the Christ-gift effects the destruction of the sinful person and the re-creation of the human in Christ. Where Philo can speak of a human's worth or virtuousness, even though this still points to divine causation, Paul emphasizes not human worth or virtue but unworthiness, weakness, and inability: all worth (or righteousness) is constituted and found in Christ. The basis of this generosity is divine love.

The differences between a cosmological/causative or Christological/creative understanding of divine grace are undeniably significant. But as we have seen, in both of these construals there is an element of a lack of fit between giver, gift, and recipient. For Paul this lack of fit is simple: because no human is worthy, whatever God gives cannot be congruent with its recipient. Rather, the gift has an effect: it creates something that does not exist—the unrighteous is justified, the enemy is reconciled, the foolish receive the Spirit. For Philo, the lack of fit is more slight and subtle, relating to: 1) Divine causation: God created only because he was gracious, and his beneficence is a function of his creating power.[165] The "creation and arrangement of the world" demonstrates that God wills to bring order from disorder (τάξιν ἐξ ἀταξίας), harmony and fellowship from disharmony and disunity, light from darkness. Why is this so? Because God "is always anxious to remodel with his beneficent powers" (ἀεὶ γάρ ἐστιν ἐπιμελὲς αὐτῷ καὶ ταῖς εὐεργέτισιν αὐτοῦ δυνάμεσι) the bad into the

164 To borrow a saying that can apply to Philo: ὅστις γὰρ ἔχει, δοθήσεται αὐτῷ καὶ περισσευθήσεται· ὅστις δὲ οὐκ ἔχει, καὶ ὃ ἔχει ἀρθήσεται ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ (Matt 13.12).

165 Chapter 1, section 2.2. Cf. e.g. *Fug*. 66; *Leg*. 3.78.

good, to "rearrange it into a better state."[166] Any good thing a human does is the utilization of gifts received before doing any good thing; prior gifts always precede receiving gifts. 2) Divine perfection: God necessarily restrains and shapes his giving so that humans can receive without being killed, but insofar as God's gifts set humans in relation to himself, there is never a fit. 3) Human piety: Philo's insistence that humans should never consider themselves worthy is striking, for it signals more than humble piety. As Philo asks, how great must a person be "who will be judged worthy of grace (τὸν ἄξιον χάριτος) before God?" Philo is doubtful that even the perfect cosmos is worthy enough.[167] In relation to God's perfection, humans are only worthy because God considers and makes them so.

Luther's statement—"the love of God does not find, but creates, that which is pleasing to it"—is an accurate encapsulation of Paul's understanding of divine generosity. We can rephrase Luther to fit Philo: "the love of God finds that which is pleasing to it because God has created it."

4.1.5 Conclusion

Philo and Paul speak of grace enough, in different contexts though with general consistency, that one can always find one more comparison to make. The differences between Philo and Paul are important, but *why* they are different is more important. Philo and Paul conceive of different gifts for different kinds of humanity. Philo's understanding of grace presumes a humanity that can be worthy—progress in virtue—through the use of the tools God has provided. Paul's understanding of grace presumes a humanity that has been "given up" and are consequently unworthy. As Philo states, the godless person "fails to attain the goal (ὁ ἄθεος ἀτυχεῖ τοῦ τέλους), so that he might be in more pain (ὀδυνᾶται)," and no strength is added to his actions but it is rather taken away (τοὐναντίον δ' ὑφαιρουμένης).[168] Philo stresses the causation and graciousness of God to an extreme, such that living an immoral life is pure rejection of God's gifts. Why would God continue to give to such a person when he already has given, his gifts are still on offer, and yet are refused? At this point, "scandalous and foolish" is the proper description of Paul's understanding of grace: God targets as his beneficiaries precisely those who should not receive it. Yet, to repeat, even for Philo to an extent God's gifts are ultimately unfitting, both because God is incomparably perfect (humans are not) and because divine causation means that everything good (everything that makes one fitting to

166 *Spec*. 4.187. Cf. *Leg*. 3.105.

167 *Deus* 106.

168 *Det*. 114.

receive) must be attributed to God (not to the human). God does not give unfitting gifts, because God—as Creator—makes them fit. Accordingly, it may be better to say that for Philo God's gifts are *wholly fitting because* God is overly gracious, while for Paul God's gifts are *wholly unfitting yet* God is overly gracious. The location of divine grace in the cosmos or Christ results in dissimilar convictions about why and to whom God gives.

4.2 *Mediation and the Structure of the Gift*

Paul asks in Romans 10.14–15, "How are they to call on one they have not believed in? And how are they to believe in one they have not heard of? And how are they to hear without one preaching? And how are they to preach if they are not sent?" According to Paul, Christ had sent him to proclaim the gospel (εὐαγγελίζεσθαι; 1 Cor 1.17) just as God had revealed Christ in him so that he might proclaim him (εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτόν; Gal 1.16). Preaching is necessary for salvation; indeed, it was by God's wisdom that God chose to "save those who believe through the foolishness of preaching" (κήρυγμα; 1 Cor 1.21). Thus, Paul's gospel was not of human origins but was received through a revelation of Christ (Gal 1.11–12), for it is "the power of God for salvation" (Rom 1.16; 1 Cor 1.18). Paul asserts that his proclamation sets him in an important relationship with his churches: "we preached . . . you believed" (κηρύσσομεν . . . ἐπιστεύσατε; 1 Cor 15.11).[169] Paul believes, therefore he speaks;[170] and therefore his churches believe (cf. 2 Cor 4.13). Paul's churches receive his proclamation not as human words but as God's words, because it is God who calls believers into his kingdom and glory (1 Thess 2.12–13; 5.24; cf. also 1 Thess 1.5; Gal 3.2–5).[171] Accordingly, faith is always divine initiative and gift (cf. Phil 1.29: ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ . . . τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύειν).

To say that proclamation of the gospel is important to Paul is an understatement. As we have seen, Paul believed that he played an important role in divine gift-giving, because the gift is received through proclamation. As Winger states, "Good news is not *good news* if it is not announced."[172] And as Litfin explains, commenting on 1 Cor 1.17, "Paul viewed his preaching as an assignment from

169 Thus, Paul can employ familial language for this relationship (e.g. 1 Cor 4.14–15; 2 Cor 12.14; Gal 4.19–20). On which, see B.R. Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007).

170 Cf. T.B. Savage, *Power Through Weakness: Paul's Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 180: "it is faith which moves Paul to preach."

171 Winger, "Tradition," 68 thus states that "*call* reveals to us the meaning of *received the gospel*."

172 Winger, "Tradition," 75.

Christ himself. This preaching constituted his apostolic calling."[173] The apostle is wrapped up in God's work of calling humanity into salvation, because apostleship is a matter of embodying the gospel in life and enacting the gospel in proclamation. Paul's proclamation is only significant and effective if it is accompanied by power and the Spirit,[174] if it is actually God's word and not his own;[175] and Paul believed this to be the case.

There is no straightforward comparison in Philo's writings. That a human could play an integral role in *divine* gift-giving is out of the question for Philo, because the ability of humans to give gifts is limited;[176] God does that. Rather, gifts are not given by God himself—the Existent One—but by a series of mediators who are really themselves extensions of God's own being, or are different ways of speaking about God (the Logos, θεός the Power).[177] God can bless other humans through the generosity of a righteous person,[178] but humans exist primarily as recipients of God's bountiful generosity. One created thing that does play an important role in giving is the cosmos, which mirrors God as a gift-giver through natural provisions (rain, produce, etc.); but this is due to the presence of the Logos in the world and God's working through his created reality.

Paul's explicit role is anomalous.[179] To quote Schütz, "In Paul's whole apostolic life one sees the manifestation of God's same act which one sees in the gospel itself."[180] If we look from Philo's viewpoint, one could say that Paul so concentrates divine gift-giving in Christ and the Spirit that he cannot really speak of creation as grace in any specific way. There are hints of this—of creation as gift and the gift-nature of all things—in verses such as 1 Cor 8.6, Rom 11.36, but it remains a latent possibility or extension of Paul's thought. In this way, Philo might consider Paul's gift-theology strangely myopic and insuffi-

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173 D. Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1–4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 188.

174 Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 853: "for Paul both the *understanding* of the gospel and the *event of preaching*, including the *hearing that leads to faith*, are the work of the Spirit."

175 Cf. Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 239: "Preaching the gospel fully is inaugurating those powers whose origin is beyond Paul, but which are manifested in what he says and what he does."

176 On human gift-giving in Philo, see next chapter.

177 For a helpful discussion of God's immanence in Philo, see Frick, *Divine Providence*, 57–88.

178 See esp. *Migr*. 121; *Spec*. 4.74.

179 As Briones, "Mutual Brokers," 548–52 shows, the relationship between Paul and his church is "one reciprocal relationship," where not only Paul's churches receive gifts from God *through Paul*, but Paul receives from God *through his churches*.

180 Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 246.

cient; he would no doubt be troubled that the Christ-gift seems incompatible with creation, as it effects "new creation." At issue, then, is the structure and mediation of divine gifts: Paul is separated from Philo by the particularity of the Christ-gift. That is, for Paul, the gift is an historical event that happened in a specific time and place; its particularity necessitates its mediation or announcement through apostles. For Philo, the individual exists within God's greatest gift and in direct relation to God the giver who gives all good things. Grace as the world and as part of the cosmic order need not be mediated: gifts come directly from God, and a human mediator would only—to an extent—get in the way. Paul and Philo therefore conceive of God's gifts as different kinds of things, which means they are necessarily given in different ways.

5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that three aspects of Paul's understanding of divine gift-giving converge in the person of Paul himself. First, Paul is a paradigm for receiving the incongruous gift. As Paul presents his testimony, he is an unworthy recipient of divine beneficence—and as with Paul, also with the rest of humanity. God is fundamentally one who gives to those who are unfitting to receive. Second, Paul considers his apostleship to be a gift inseparable from the Christ-gift. This close relationship exists because Paul traces the origin of both gifts to the same event, and because his apostleship exists to proclaim the Christ-gift. Third, Paul thus acts as a mediator of the gift—as an ambassador who proclaims and makes possible the reception of the gift. Paul does not give the gift—God, Christ, and the Spirit are the active agents of giving—but insofar as reception of the gift occurs through hearing the word, apostolic proclamation is indispensable. Paul as apostle is bound up with the gift such that rejection of the gift is rejection of Paul.

What these three aspects of the divine gift effect is the creation of new communities that overturn commonly held social and ethnic norms. The gift is given in Paul's proclamation to unworthy individuals who, by receiving the gift, enter a new kind of community. In the gospel, God calls humans "into the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor 1.9). The next chapter will explore this more fully, showing that the theological foundation for Paul's understanding of community is that each member of the community has received the incongruous Christ-gift. The creation of communities in Christ creates a new theological and social reality, in which individuals are bound together through material and spiritual giving.

CHAPTER 5

The Gift and the Creation of Gift-Communities

1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I argued three main points about Paul's theology of grace: the Christ-event is the primary gift within a complex of divine gifts; this gift is given to the undeserving, who are reconstituted through participation in the event; and Paul, as apostle, has a vital role in this giving, because he proclaims the gift. This chapter will tie together these points by contending that the result of this giving is the creation of communities that are bonded together by the reciprocal giving of material and spiritual support. In a strong sense, Paul's theology of gift *requires* community for its instantiation. Individual gift-recipients enter communities that participate in and are conformed to the Christ-gift, and communal life thus takes a particular gift-shaped form. For Paul, proper human life, individually and communally, is gift-shaped, both in receiving and giving gifts, all as an aspect of God's generosity.

God gives to the unworthy; but that does not mean unworthy recipients simply remain unworthy. Indeed, they are no longer unrighteous because they are now righteous *in Christ*, and their new Christocentric life should issue forth in new forms of living: the Christ-gift refashions humans to live new life.[1] One receives the gift as an unfitting recipient, but insofar as the gift effects new creation, one cannot simply continue walking according to old ways and patterns of life (e.g. 2 Cor 5.16–17; Rom 6). Much like Philo, for Paul the question is: will you receive this gift, and receive it properly, not in vain? If the gift is received well, the rest of human life falls into place, because the unfitting Christ-gift founds and funds human life and action. This is the starting point for Paul's moral vision.

This chapter explores one aspect of this vision: how God's unfitting generosity sets its recipients free to be beneficent to others, in community.[2] Thus,

1 Helpful discussions of Paul's ethical vision can be found in V.P. Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (reprint; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009); J.P. Sampley, *Walking Between the Times: Paul's Moral Reasoning* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); R.B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 16–59.

2 While it would be interesting to compare Philo's notion of progress in virtue with Paul's understanding of the life of the believer—from reception of the unfitting gift to the presentation of believers to God as "blameless in holiness" in the end (1 Thess 3.13), and whatever amount of

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what we are examining—from one angle—is the Pauline claim that individuals in Christ are not simply set free, but set free to love others (cf. Gal 5.13). For Paul, the gift that individuals receive is structurally social: those reconstituted in Christ are reconstituted socially in relation to others.[3] Significantly, when one is called in grace, one is called "into the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor 1.9). Being "in Christ" means living relationally not only towards Christ but also towards others in Christ. The embodiment-enactment dialectic that I proposed in the previous chapter also shapes Paul's ecclesiology: Paul's churches, and the individual members, *embody* the gospel as the "body of Christ" and *enact* the gospel through giving in their intra-ecclesial and social relations.[4]

Accordingly, sections two (Rom 12; 1 Cor 12) and three (2 Cor 8–9) will consider how gifts function in creating and uniting communities, how human giving relates to the Christ-gift, and thus how divine gift-giving issues in human gift-giving and structures communal life. The final section will then compare Paul and Philo on three interrelated topics: human giving, thanksgiving, and community.

2 Gifts and Community

In Romans 12.3–8 and 1 Corinthians 12.4–31, Paul makes arguments about the nature of Christ's body and the gifts God gives to individuals; but where Romans stresses primarily the gift-nature of existence and service in the body,

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"fit" develops in between—this route is preferable for two reasons: 1) examining how believers progress (or do not) in fittingness deserves far more space than is available here (and the seeds of an answer have been given in the previous chapters); and 2) the theme of human generosity is more explicitly related to what has come before conceptually and lexically (i.e. Paul uses gift language and concepts). For an exploration of the other theme in Paul, see J.M.G. Barclay, "Believers and the 'Last Judgment' in Paul," in *Eschatologie—Eschatology: The Sixth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium: Eschatology in Old Testament, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. H.-J. Eckstein, C. Landmesser, and H. Lichtenberger; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 195–208.

3 This theme could be developed further—for example, through the relation between body and member language in Rom 6 and 12, but the fact that Paul believed communities were necessary and integral to the shape of his theology (see esp. Hays, *Moral Vision*, 32–36) is so readily accepted that it seems superfluous.

4 Thus, Barclay, "Transformation," 388 n. 34: "The agency of believers may . . . be crucially linked to their participation in Christian community as well as to their participation in Christ: in a community where believers are channels of divine grace to one another, agency is constituted by mutual interdependence as well as direct dependence on the Spirit."

1 Corinthians emphasizes the "solidarity and difference" that constitutes the diverse members of the community.[5] Both set forth the vision that the community is the body of Christ, embodying and enacting Christ's self-giving on individual and social levels, as their life together is defined and united by Christological generosity: first in receiving and then in giving.[6]

2.1 *Gifts According to the Gift: Romans 12.3–8*

In Romans 12.1–2, Paul exhorted the Roman believers to have a transformed mind so as to know the will of God; this provides the basis for his appeal in 12.3 not to have an overly-high self-opinion. Paul grounds his appeal διὰ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι. I have already argued that this formula refers to Paul's apostleship, and we need not repeat the argument here.[7] Paul has received a particular gift that designates his role as apostle within the community.

Yet although χάρις designates Paul's apostleship in 12.3, it does not do so in 12.6, where Paul states, "We have gifts (χαρίσματα) according to the gift (χάρις) that was given to us that differ."[8] The common feature of every gift given to community members is that each is κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν. Ultimately, we must ask two interrelated questions: First, what common χάρις have Paul and the Roman believers received in 12.6? On any reading, the referents for χάρις in 12.3 and 6 should be different. Second, what referent for χάρις best makes sense of the relationship designated by κατά when the χαρίσματα are the services listed in 12.6–8? One could view χάρις in 12.6 as generic Christian ministry, essentially in parallel to its use in 12.3.[9] Yet, if χαρίσματα are the services listed in 12.6–8, then it does not make sense to read χάρις in 12.3 and 6 similarly; Paul's χάρις *is* his service. Χάρις in 12.6 is related to the χαρίσματα of 12.6–8, of course, but they are also distinguished: for example, one is singular, the other is plural, one is "given," the other is "had." And while it could be argued that the "grace given" formulae typically refer to ministry assignments, so it would

5 D.G. Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of Paul's Ethics* (London: T&T Clark, 2005).

6 Cf. G. Bornkamm, *Paul* (trans. M.G. Stalker; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1971), 195: "Only in this context of the effects and gifts of grace does the apostle utilize the ancient world's figure of the one body and the variety of its members."

7 See chapter 4, section 2.1.

8 For this translation, see K. Berding, "Romans 12.4–8: One Sentence or Two?," *NTS* 52 (2006): 435.

9 Cf. J.K. Goodrich, "'Standard of Faith' or 'Measure of a Trusteeship'? A Study in Romans 12:3," *CBQ* 74 (2012): 759.

seem natural for the same to hold here, this is not always true (see 2 Cor 8.1), and when it is true, they refer to Paul's apostleship, not to general ministry.[10]

Accordingly, as Fitzmyer states about 12.6, "All others partake in the gift that is Christ Jesus. Yet there are other charisms that Christians are endowed with, and of these Paul speaks here."[11] The one body relates to the one χάρις as the many members relate to the diverse χαρίσματα. The χάρις of 12.6 is the true root of the χαρίσματα of 12.6, as well as Paul's χάρις in 12.3. Paul's χάρις *qua* apostleship in 12.3 is different from χάρις in 12.6 because it is related to the Christ-gift as the gift that communicates the Christ-gift to others, instantiated in particular services performed by the individual members of the body. Differentiation and relation mark the connection between χάρις in 12.3 and 6 and χαρίσματα and χάρις in 12.6. Accordingly, I concur with Satake: we can question

> ob mit χάρις hier . . . die Gnade des Dienstes gemeint ist. Paulus erwähnt im gleichen Satz auch χαρίσματα, also die Gaben zum Dienst, und schreibt der χάρις die Funktion zu, diese Charismen zu begründen. Χάρις und Charismen sind also nicht ganz identisch. Vor allem ist aber zu beachten, daß Paulus für die χάρις das Partizip Aorist δοθεῖσα wählt, für die Charismen das präsentische ἔχοντες. Das weist darauf hin, daß er mit großer Wahrscheinlichkeit bei χάρις an die Bekehrung der Römer denkt. Das alles legt nahe, daß er χάρις hier soteriologisch im engern Sinne versteht, also als diejenige Gnade, die die Römer einst zum Glauben führte.[12]

Therefore, once again, it is better to view χάρις as the Christ-gift, or more broadly as *life in Christ*, the gift which generates community (cf. also Rom 5.2). Paul's use of χάρις in 12.3–6 places the entire community under the rubric of divine gift, while also signaling Paul's apostolic relationship to this gift and the community. For Paul, there is one body of Christ and one common χάρις, but

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10 The exception is 1 Cor 1.4. Here, as Zeller, *Charis*, 186 states, "Diese sich so ausdifferenzierende Gnade ist nicht mehr einfach die Heilstat Gottes in Christus, sie wird aber doch durch eine präpositionale Wendung wie ἐν Χριστῷ damit in Verbindung gebracht." The "einfach" is key: the language of "spiritual gifts" is wrapped up with the "Heilstat Gottes," and there is a interdependent relationship of χαρίσματα to χάρις, which is stated more clearly in Rom 12.6. Phil 1.7 is also an interesting case, as the Philippians participate in Paul's apostolic ministry; see Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 161–65.

11 Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 646. Cf. Eastman, *Significance of Grace*, 144.

12 Satake, "Apostolat und Gnade," 101. Similarly, P. Stuhlmacher, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 173. Satake's point stands without reading strict temporality into Paul's participles or a strong reference to conversion.

within that body—and springing from that χάρις—are many χαρίσματα.[13] As Käsemann states, a χάρισμα is "the concretion and individuation of grace;"[14] or similarly, Fitzmyer calls χαρίσματα "the specific participation of individual Christians in grace."[15] The κατά of 12.6 does theological work by Christologically defining and circumscribing the nature of χαρίσματα, thus giving criteria to understand what is and is not a gift from God, as well as what is and is not a proper use of such a gift.[16] Those who receive a χάρισμα and use it in service participate in the Christ-gift, life in Christ, for their individual gifting is an instantiation of Christ's generosity towards humanity.[17] Human self-giving in service imitates Christology as Christology funds human giving.

So why does Paul not use χάρισμα for his apostleship? The answer is not explicitly presented, but given the argument of the last chapter, it is reasonable to argue that Paul understands his apostleship as integral to the communication of the Christ-gift and how it affects humans. Χαρίσματα are the outworking of the Christ-gift, but they only exist because of the faith received via apostolic proclamation. What is clear in 1 Corinthians, however, is that apostleship can also be set alongside other χαρίσματα—though Paul makes no strong or clear connection between χάρισμα and his own apostleship[18]—and that Paul himself received other χαρίσματα common to the community.[19] Paul modulates his presentation to fit the argument.

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13 On χαρίσματα generally, see E. Nardoni, "The Concept of Charism in Paul," *CBQ* 55 (1993): 68–80; G.D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 32–35.

14 Käsemann, *Romans*, 333.

15 Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 646. Cf. Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 607.

16 Cf. Käsemann, *Romans*, 333: "... the power of grace is limited christologically. This rules out in advance non-Christian modes of behavior."

17 Cf. Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 559: "For Paul the archetypal *charisma* was the gracious act of Christ on the cross." E.g. Rom 5.15. There is no reason to delve into the specifics of the gifts in 12.6–8. As Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 605 states, "The first four primarily reflect the community gathered for worship, while the final three single out various 'care givers' within the community." Additionally, we should note that most interpreters view 12.6 as starting a new sentence and therefore the different gifts have an imperatival force; see, e.g., Cranfield, *Romans*, 618. However, Berding, "Romans 12.4–8" has argued convincingly that 12.4–8 forms one sentence; consequently, the gifts/services are illustrative of Christian community. See also Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 725; Jewett, *Romans*, 744.

18 So, Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 251: "Paul never explicitly ties the apostolic role to the notion of charisma, but the apostle seems to be an important instance of what he regards as charismatic."

19 Cf. Eastman, *Significance of Grace*, 144: "In 12:3 especially, it is evident that Paul can use χάρις in a way that overlaps with χάρισμα." As Barth, *Romans*, 439 states, "The grace that

Another question: why did Paul employ gift terminology rather than something like πνευματικά? Käsemann argued that Paul directed this passage against "enthusiasts" and thus removed the focus from ecstatic gifts; note that the Spirit is not explicitly present, and the gifts listed are not particularly flamboyant.[20] While this theory certainly stretches the evidence here, Käsemann accurately noted that Paul believes "heavenly gifts do not explode into the earthly sphere and produce radical disorder in the community."[21] Paul used gift-language to speak to the unity, order, and harmony (that should be) created by gifts in community.[22] For Käsemann, as for Paul(!), gifts work against autonomy, because χαρίσματα enable one to serve, and each person's gift is only realized in serving or edifying others.[23] These gifts do not promote autonomy but being-for-the-other.[24]

Accordingly, life in Pauline communities starts from proper recognition of one's place within the community, not a grab for personal honor.[25] Paul's appeal in 12.3 begins with a call for individuals to view themselves with σωφροσύνη according to the μέτρον πίστεως God has measured (ἐμέρισεν) to each. Scholars are divided on the phrase "measure of faith," with the majority interpretation being the faith that all believers exercise equally.[26] However,

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was given him constitutes the peculiarity of his position and the paradox of his apostolate. He has been 'commissioned and seconded to be a scout in the highest service' (Kierkegaard). Yet he assumes that his hearers are similarly placed."

20 Käsemann, *Romans*, 332–33.

21 Käsemann, *Romans*, 334.

22 As B.C. Dunson, "Faith in Romans: The Salvation of the Individual or Life in Community?," *JSNT* 34 (2011): 34–35 notes, at the beginning of the letter Paul states his desire to impart a χάρισμα πνευματικόν to the Romans so that they might be strengthened (1.11); this is done precisely for the "mutual encouragement" (συμπαρακληθῆναι) of both the Romans and Paul. In 12.3–8 Paul is returning to a theme already mentioned: how gifts bind together Christian community.

23 Cf. Käsemann, *Romans*, 334.

24 As Hultgren, *Romans*, 450 notes about 12.6–8, for each gift "Paul adds a notation about making use of it for the sake of others." On the relation of individual and community in Romans, see B.C. Dunson, *Individual and Community in Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

25 On this theme, see H. Moxnes, "The Quest for Honor and the Unity of the Community in Romans 12 and in the Orations of Dio Chrysostom," in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (ed. T. Engberg-Pedersen; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 203–30; J.R. Harrison, "Augustan Rome and the Body of Christ: A Comparison of the Social Vision of the Res Gestae and Paul's Letter to the Romans," *HTR* 106 (2013): 14.

26 Cf. esp. C.E.B. Cranfield, "ΜΕΤΡΟΝ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ in Romans XII.3," *NTS* 8 (1962): 345–51; Dunson, "Faith in Romans," 35–37.

Goodrich has argued convincingly that the phrase "should be interpreted as a reference to the individual ministry, or charismatic function, distributed to each believer."[27] Accordingly, "every renewed person in the church has been privileged to receive a 'trusteeship' (πίστις) from God."[28] One has different gifts according to one's own μέτρον πίστεως. Grace is thus both generative and evaluative of community and of the individual's place within it. As Oakes states, "Paul is not calling for realistic assessment of oneself on the usual scales of status and intellect."[29] The ultimate criterion for assessment is incongruous gifting, which undercuts honor, social status, etc.

Paul's statements about the community as one body build on the appeal in 12.3b. Paul does not elaborate the body metaphor as in 1 Corinthians 12 but the basic idea—every body has many parts, and these parts do not all perform the same function—is present. One becomes a member of the community through being in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ; 12.5). The body does not then fuse into homogeneity, but rather all in Christ are "individually members" of his body.[30] This simple unity-in-difference grounds Paul's elaboration of various gifts/functions in the community in 12.6–8, as the body of Christ functionally embodies and enacts Christ's beneficence by each member's looking towards another's needs (cf. Phil 2.5ff.). Only on this basis of communal harmony does Paul address how the community relates both to those inside and outside of it in 12.9–15.

In sum, Paul's gift-theology in Romans 12.3–8 speaks to a community that has its existence and unity precisely through its existence in the gift (ἐν Χριστῷ) and through the new life of each individual as givers. The Christological derivation and nature of χαρίσματα is essential for defining the nature of the community. Individuals within the community remain individuals with diverse abilities for service, but these gifts draw them into a community that is defined by generosity.

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27 Goodrich, "Romans 12:3," quoting at 771. Similarly, J.C. Poirier, "The Measure of Stewardship: Πίστις in Romans 12:3," *TynB* 59 (2008): 145–52. See also Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 609–610.

28 Goodrich, "Romans 12:3," 772.

29 P. Oakes, *Reading Romans in Pompeii: Paul's Letter at Ground Level* (London: SPCK, 2009), 100.

30 Cf. Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 106: "Differences, like instrumental tones, provide us with the recognizable univocity that makes up the melody of the True."

2.2 *The Solidarity of Gifts: 1 Corinthians 12.3–31*

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul asserts that the confession that demarcates the Christian community—Jesus is Lord—occurs by the Holy Spirit (12.3). The subsequent sections of chapter 12 use this base to expound the working of the Spirit in diverse, yet interdependent, individuals within the community; here, as throughout the letter, Paul exhorts the Corinthians so that "there may be no schisms among you" (1.10).[31]

The note of unity-in-diversity is sounded prominently in 12.4–11, where Paul speaks about χαρίσματα and πνεῦμα, gifts and Giver.[32] 12.4–6 function as a heading of sorts for this theme: there are diversities of gifts (διαιρέσεις χαρισμάτων), but the same Spirit (τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα); diversities of services (διαιρέσεις διακονιῶν), and the same Lord (ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος); and diversities of activities (διαιρέσεις ἐνεργημάτων), but the same God (ὁ αὐτὸς θεός) who works all things in all. The gifts, services, and activities cannot be distinguished neatly, which suggests that divine gifts are actions (services) directed towards others.[33] Likewise, the activity of the Spirit, Christ, and God cannot be split. While the Spirit is the primary agent in 12.7–11, Paul sets the Spirit's working within the context of triune divine operations. The one Spirit works within the diverse members of the body, enabling and empowering divine gifting.[34]

In 12.7, Paul sets forth three important facets of these gifts. First, gifts are given to individuals within the community, as individuals (ἑκάστῳ δίδοται). Second, these gifts are given for the mutual benefit of all (πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον).[35] The beginning and end of the sentence emphasize both the individual *and* the community *and* how the individual's gifts relate to the community.[36] As Schütz states, "supplying the goal provides Paul with the criteria for discrimination among spiritual gifts."[37] Third, gifts are pneumatological: Paul states that what is given to each is a "manifestation of the Spirit" (ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος),

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31 Cf. M.M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 1.

32 Cf. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 452.

33 Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 554 states that the three items are the same thing "alternatively expressed." Cf. also Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 161. Differently, S. Schatzmann, *A Pauline Theology of Charismata* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 34. Cf. further Nardoni, "Concept of Charism," 73.

34 As Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 253 states about Paul's pneumatology more broadly: "The spirit is not merely gift, it is also norm. It is not merely enabling, it is also regulative."

35 Zeller, *Charis*, 189 notes the parallel with *Virt*. 189, in which God's δωρεαί given to individuals are of common benefit (κοινωφελεῖς) to all.

36 Cf. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 210–11.

37 Schütz, *Apostolic Authority*, 256.

but then says one gift is given "through the Spirit," another "according to the same Spirit," another "in the same Spirit," and closes the section by saying that it is the Spirit that parcels out specific gifts to whomever the Spirit desires (12.11).[38] Accordingly, the Spirit is gift, Giver, and the agent at work in the manifestation of the gift. Diverse gifts for diverse individuals have their unity in the Spirit, who works the gifts πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον of the community.

The repeated notes of unity-in-diversity—of gifts in 12.4–11 and of members in the body in 12.12–13—precede the discussion of the interdependence of the diverse members in 12.14–26, which stresses the point more emphatically than anywhere else in Paul's letters.[39] The many members are one body in Christ because—in God's generosity—"in one Spirit" (ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι) they all were baptized into one body (εἰς ἓν σῶμα) and drank the one Spirit (ἓν πνεῦμα). For Paul, since a body is necessarily made up of many parts, there can be neither "inferiority complexes" (14–20) nor "superiority complexes" (21–25).[40] While some members have more honor than others (or appear to), God gives greater honor to those members that lack it (22–23).

Why should the community remain a united group while its members are so strikingly different? The short answer, for Paul, is that God wills it so: "But now God appointed (ἔθετο) the members, each one of them in the body as he willed" (ἠθέλησεν; 18). God chooses to create community from and in diversity.[41] Paul does not think this social reality works because humans make it so; rather, the body is unified because God makes it so through the Spirit. God accomplishes this by giving different gifts to individuals, and through these gifts each individual plays a necessary role in the operation of the body. Additionally, God establishes parity throughout the body through uneven dispersals of honor: "God united the body (ὁ θεὸς συνεκέρασεν τὸ σῶμα) by giving excessive

38 Cf. Collins, *Corinthians*, 453: "No substantial difference in meaning appears to result from Paul's use of different prepositions. . . . The various prepositions in Paul's list of charisms provide the list with stylistic variation." Of course, Philo would need a full treatise to unravel Paul's prepositions here.

39 For background to Paul's body analogy, see D.B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: YUP, 1995); D.G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 178–79; Mitchell, *Rhetoric*, 157–60.

40 Cf. Schatzmann, *Charismata*, 46.

41 As Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 180 notes, "Paul's insistence that the members are assigned to their position by divine appointment . . . could form an element in a conservative ideology which legitimated a social hierarchy by appealing to divine ordering. Yet it seems clear . . . that his concern here . . . is not to legitimate any kind of hierarchy within the body, but only to legitimate its diversity." Cf. also Martin, *Body*, 94.

honor to what was lacking" (25). The result of God's working in this two-fold way should be that the community exists without schism and therefore all of the members care for the same thing in behalf of one another (τὸ αὐτὸ ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων μεριμνῶσιν τὰ μέλη; 25). Everything drives towards this unity of purpose: the body functions in such a way that even the suffering or rejoicing of one member causes all members of the body to suffer or rejoice. As Horrell summarizes, "What Paul's use of the body image reveals then . . . is his intention to engender not merely a form of corporate solidarity, but specifically—as in 1 Cor 1.10–4.21—a form of solidarity constructed through reversing the conventional positions of high and low, wise and foolish, honourable and dishonourable, and fostering instead a mutual and egalitarian other-regard."[42]

Hays states that 12.7 "contains in a nutshell the burden of Paul's teaching in chapters 12–14,"[43] and chapter 12—as encapsulated in 12.7—does indeed provide the foundation for chapters 13–14. The topic of unity-in-diversity naturally flows into Paul's discussion of love, in chapter 13, as the "greater gift" the community should pursue. Then, in chapter 14 Paul discusses the role of gifts insofar as they both build up the community and help those outside it. When divine gifts are being properly exercised, the community is edified and those outside are reached.[44] Accordingly, 1 Cor 12 and Rom 12 play a similar role in Paul's argumentative flow: a discussion of intra-communal relations precedes discussing how the community relates to the world.

2.3 *Conclusion*

For Paul, divine gifts create community and sustain solidarity within those communities. The single, unfitting gift of Jesus Christ effects the transformation of individuals, which occurs "in Christ"—and the result of being "in Christ" is community with other believers, Christ's body. Through the activity of the Holy Spirit—a gift inseparable from the Christ-gift—believers embody their benefactor on both individual and communal levels: each individual serves through their gifts, and the result is that the corporate "body of Christ" is constituted by beneficent members, and is thus the body of Christ to the world. The community is created by a single gift and sustained by many gifts. As Horrell puts it, "The basis for solidarity, for the construction of community . . . is found in Paul's Christology: as believers make the story of Christ

42 Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference*, 124.

43 Hays, *Corinthians*, 211.

44 Cf. Käsemann, *Romans*, 339: "Christ takes possession of every status, every present capacity and weakness of his members. He uses the most divergent forms of discipleship symbolically to penetrate the world instead of withdrawing from it."

their own, participating in his death and new life, so they leave behind the old world, and become members of one body, in Christ."[45]

These two texts focus on gifts that are considered special endowments from God, which the individual puts into practice in and for the life of the community. A whole range of acts is implied by gifts: from the mundane tasks of administration and service, charitable acts of almsgiving and encouragement, to the extramundane works of tongues and healing. They have a wide socio-theological bearing, and they inculcate a particular kind of Christian existence: in community, in loving service towards the other. We shall now turn to 2 Corinthians 8–9, to explore further Paul's belief that divine giving effects human giving, and particularly material giving.

3 God's Grace and Human Giving

In 2 Corinthians 8–9,[46] Paul admonishes the Corinthians to provide financial support for the Christians in Jerusalem.[47] As we have already noted, for Paul,

45 Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference*, 132.

46 The unity of 2 Corinthians remains an open debate. For a collection of letters, see G. Bornkamm, "The History of the Origin of the So-Called Second Letter to the Corinthians," *NTS* 8 (1962): 258–64; N.H. Taylor, "The Composition and Chronology of Second Corinthians," *JSNT* 44 (1991): 67–87. For unity, see J.D.H. Amador, "Revisiting 2 Corinthians: Rhetoric and the Case for Unity," *NTS* 46 (2000): 92–111; Barnett, *Corinthians*, 15–25. Although the unity of the letter does not affect the argument here, I follow F. Watson, "2 Cor. X–XIII and Paul's Painful Letter to the Corinthians," *JTS* 35 (1984): 324–46 in viewing 2 Cor 10–13 as the "painful letter" and 2 Cor 1–9 as one subsequent letter. The unity of chapters 8–9 could, however, affect my reading. For a sustained argument against unity, see H.D. Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985). However, S.K. Stowers, "Peri Men Gar and the Integrity of 2 Cor. 8 and 9," *NovT* 32 (1990): 340–48 has convincingly demonstrated that "the only argument for [disunity] . . . subject to verification"—that περὶ μὲν γάρ cannot connect chapter 9 to 8—is incorrect. See further Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 41–44, 420–33.

47 On Paul's collection, see D. Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992); K. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy* (Naperville: Allenson, 1966); Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*; B. Beckheuer, *Paulus und Jerusalem: Kollekte und Mission im theologischen Denken des Heidenapostels* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997); S. Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor: Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000); and now esp. D.J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in Its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

the gift's location in and effect on the community cannot be restricted to a spiritual realm; indeed, the revolutionary character of God's gift in Christ is the *total* claim it makes on the lives of its recipients.[48] Grace founds and funds the action of believers: the Christ-gift is generative of human giving, and in giving humans are drawn into the dynamic of God's gift-economy. A distinctive note on reciprocity is sounded here: grace is received to be given, and in the giving and receiving of gifts, relationships are created and sustained. As Ogereau states, the collection "represented an act of charity . . . that . . . was intended to transcend geo-political, socio-economic, and ethnic distinctions in a revolutionary way, as well as redefine the social foundations of the emergent Christ-believing communities."[49] Our examination will focus on four issues: how humans can give, the manner in which humans give, what human giving accomplishes, and how giving relates to thanksgiving.

3.1 *How Can Humans Give?*

Paul's appeal for the Corinthians to give is not straightforward. For Paul, it seems that the ability to give is not possessed by virtue of merely being human.[50] Rather, Paul grounds human giving in an account of divine giving, in which key concepts such as generosity, wealth, and poverty find new meanings.

Paul discloses "the grace of God" given in the churches of Macedonia (8.1). But, significantly, Paul next explains not divine giving but the giving of the Macedonians, whose charity presents an inversion of conventional wisdom. The context of their gift was a "severe trial," and it was not great riches that "abounded unto the riches of their generosity" but rather deep poverty (ἡ κατὰ βάθους πτωχεία) and abundant joy (8.2).[51] Precisely what could fund material giving was absent. This logic indicates that "abundance" and "wealth" do not have their typical meanings. Rather than having resources from which to give, their resource is poverty, which amounts to "rich generosity" when coupled

48 F. Young and D.F. Ford, *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1987), 166–85 provide an interesting discussion of the economic metaphors that run throughout 2 Corinthians.

49 J.M. Ogereau, "The Jerusalem Collection as Κοινωνία: Paul's Global Politics of Socio-Economic Equality and Solidarity," *NTS* 58 (2012): 361.

50 This is also the case for Philo; see section 4.1

51 The economic level of early Christians is debated; for discussion, see W.A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: YUP, 1983), 51–73; J.J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty, and Survival* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); B.W. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

with "abundant joy." The Macedonians gave beyond their means, willingly pursuing the chance to contribute to Paul's collection.

The poverty of the Macedonians is linked with the poverty of Christ (8.9); and 8.9 also harks back to 8.1: "you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" (γινώσκετε τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). God's gift is Christ's self-gift. The language of knowing creates a further link: whereas the Corinthians know (γινώσκετε) Christ's grace, Paul is seeking to "make known" (γνωρίζομεν) God's grace. The problem is not that the Corinthians are ignorant of God's grace but that they need an accurate perception of it, an understanding of its effects on their lives. Paul's appeal to Christ's generosity does just that. As Barclay puts it, "The Christ event is . . ., for Paul, the key enactment and the focal expression of the *cascade* of divine grace, from God, in Christ, through believers, to others."[52]

The χάρις τοῦ Χριστοῦ is Christ's movement from being rich to poverty, for the Corinthians' sake.[53] Interpretive issues are abundant. For example, interpreters largely agree that πλούσιος ὤν refers to Christ's preexistence,[54] though a minority believes it refers to Christ's earthly self-giving.[55] In short-form this phrase likely refers to the totality of Christ's self-giving, from preexistence through death. And although most read the participle as a concession—*although* Christ was rich, he became poor—one could also interpret it causally—*because* Christ was rich, he became poor. For Paul, as for all Jews, giving is the character of God's engagement with the world as revealed throughout history, not a concession.[56] This translation "immediately signal[s] that 'rich' is here used in a paradoxical sense, sending readers to the literary context to find that wealth here means 'wealth-as-generosity.' "[57] Believers are not made rich through Christ's revocation of possessions but through Christ's self-giving generosity. For Paul, wealth is not the polar opposite of poverty. Christ becomes poor in his generosity, and "Christ has made them rich in

52 Barclay, "Circulation of Grace," 410.

53 For an interesting reading of 8.9 in light of the "impoverished benefactor motif" as well as the "rhetorical topos of the enslaved leader," see Harrison, *Grace*, 250–68.

54 Cf. e.g. Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 163–65. See also Thrall, *2 Corinthians VIII–XIII*, 533–34.

55 Esp. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 121–23; Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 290–92.

56 Cf. similarly the causative interpretation of ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων in Phil 2.6: Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 133–34; and the paradoxical ἐλεύθερος ὤν in 1 Cor 9.19: W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther 2, 1 Kor 6,12–11,16* (Zürich: Benziger, 1995), 338–39.

57 J.M.G. Barclay, "'Because he was rich he became poor': Translation, Exegesis and Hermeneutics in the Reading of 2 Cor 8.9," in *Theologizing in the Corinthian Conflict: Studies in the Exegesis and Theology of 2 Corinthians* (eds. R. Bieringer et al.; Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 331–44.

precisely what is required of them here, rich in generosity and thus in generous contribution to the collection."[58] Perhaps counter-intuitively, one's wealth is located in one's generosity, and human giving thus takes its distinctive shape from Christ's giving. The Macedonians paradoxically gave out of their "deep poverty" and the Corinthians do not have enough possessions for giving not to be burdensome (cf. 8.13). Yet God's grace abounded to believers so that they could "abound in every good work," as Christ's giving funds and provides the model for human giving.[59]

That divine giving enables and funds human giving is also evident in 9.8–11. After stating that one should give as he or she has determined in the heart, for "God loves a cheerful giver" (cf. Prov 22.8 LXX), Paul steps back again to explain the source of one's giving. "Now God is able to make every gift abound (πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι) to you" (9.8). Presumably the need for this statement, beyond its correctness, is that the Corinthians either do not have much to give or giving what they have will put them in θλῖψις. Yet the πᾶσαν χάριν cannot be delimited; it includes anything the Corinthians could need to live out their identities in Christ. The next statement makes clear that God's giving has an other-directed purpose (as always): God will give "so that in every way at all time (ἐν παντὶ πάντοτε), being self-sufficient, you might abound in every good work (περισσεύητε εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν)." God gives gifts so that the Corinthians might abound in *good works*—not so they might abound in possessions of which they can give some to the saints, but so that they might abound in the good works of generosity. The emphasis in the passage is striking: God gives *all* gifts so that at *all* times they may abound in *every* good work.[60]

In 9.9 Paul quotes Ps 111.9 for support. The subject is debatable: who exactly is "scattering seed" and "giving to the poor?"[61] In the Psalm, the subject is the "man who fears the Lord." Paul has just described how the Corinthians would abound in good works, and the specific work in view is giving to the

58 Barclay, "'Because he was rich.'"

59 Cf. D.G. Horrell, "Paul's Narratives or Narrative Substructure: The Significance of 'Paul's Story'," in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (ed. B.W. Longenecker; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 166: "This paradigm of self-giving . . . provides a fundamental motivation and pattern for Pauline ethics."

60 Thus, B.B. Bruehler, "Proverbs, Persuasion and People: A Three-Dimensional Investigation of 2 Cor 9.6–15," *NTS* 48 (2002): 216 rightly notes that αὐτάρκεια "is no longer a virtue of freedom and stable independence, but a gift that promotes interconnectedness through giving out of one's God-given resources."

61 For the human as subject: Thrall, *2 Corinthians VIII–XIII*, 580–583; Joubert, *Benefactor*, 196; Bruehler, "Three-Dimensional," 216–17. For God as subject: Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 111–12; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 448–49; Barnett, *Corinthians*, 440.

poor (ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν). Although a righteousness that lasts "forever" would typically refer to God's righteousness, the Psalm refers to human righteousness. Furthermore, in 9.10, which parallels 9.8, Paul continues the agricultural metaphor of Psalm 111, stating that whatever seed is scattered comes from God. The quotation of Isaiah 55.10 reinforces that God is "the one who supplies seed for the sower and bread for food" and therefore God will "supply and increase your seed and cause the products of your righteousness to grow." This fits clearly with the Psalm: the human scatters seed that God has provided, and gives to the poor as a result of God's causing their righteousness to increase. The gift of the Corinthians is a giving made possible by God's generosity; divine and human giving cannot be uncoupled, and their interrelation is what makes possible Christian generosity. Accordingly, the subject in 9.9 could be human, with 9.8 and 10 providing the grounds for human agency in 9.9. Yet, God is the subject of 9.8 and 10: God gives, causes to abound, and supplies. Since there is no explicit marker that the agency of the subject has switched,[62] it might be natural to assume that God's provision is referenced in the quotation—a proof of Paul's statements. There are thus reasons to take this passage either way. I strongly favour the interpretation that *human* giving is in view, but the ambiguity in the subject's identity is significant itself. For Paul, to speak of human giving is to speak of divine giving—the latter can occur by itself, but the former requires the latter—yet this does not nullify the fact that humans do then give. Human giving is embedded in and is an extension of divine giving, with Paul seeing them neither in tension nor in competition.[63]

Paul states next that "in every way [you are] being made rich [by God] unto all generosity (πλουτιζόμενοι εἰς πᾶσαν ἁπλότητα; 9.11)." In the paradoxical manner seen in the witness of the Macedonians and ultimately in Christ, being rich is inextricably linked with generosity, because wealth is manifested in giving, not having. In simplest terms, God gives to humans so that they can give, where giving is determined less by possessions and more by willingness. This account of the relation between divine and human giving can make sense of Paul's manifold use of gift-language—specifically χάρις—throughout these two chapters. Underlying the diverse use of χάρις is a relation within the

62 However, it is curious that Paul switches δίδωμι for ἐπιχορηγέω in the Isa 55.10 citation, which may signal a distinction in agencies between verse 9, where δίδωμι is used. If 9.9 and 10 used δίδωμι, it would be much more difficult to argue for a human subject.

63 Cf. Barclay, "Transformation," 382: "What is interesting is that both interpretations can claim strong support from the context, for the good reason that the generosity in view can be said to involve *both* divine *and* human agency."

economy of gift-giving.[64] For example, in 8.1, 9, and 9.8, χάρις refers to divine giving on the part of God or Christ; in 8.4, 6, 7, 19, and 9.14 it refers to the collection, human work and giving; and finally, in 8.16 and 9.15, χάρις is thanks rendered to God. The first meaning, divine gift, makes possible the second, human giving. And as we will see below, divinely-empowered human giving is inseparable from thanksgiving.

3.2 *In What Way are Humans to Give?*

The context for Paul's account of human giving and how it occurs vis-à-vis divine giving is, of course, his admonition of the Corinthians to give.[65] In the collection, the cultural dynamics of gift, counter-gift, obligation, and gratitude are all present; but Paul subtly reinterprets them around the Christ-gift, thus giving new focus to each aspect.[66] The Corinthians are being reluctant to give—to fulfill their promise that they would give—and Paul, without simply commanding them to give, places both social (reciprocity) and theological (identity in Christ) pressure to give. That is, Paul's discussion displays both the freedom and obligation in relation to the gift that characterized all antique

64 Cf. Barclay, "Circulation of Grace," 419–20: "It does not strain Greek to use this term for [God's grace and the collection], but the combination can hardly be accidental."

65 For a reading of 2 Cor 8–9 strictly through the lens of patron-client relations, see M.A. Jennings, "Patronage and Rebuke in Paul's Persuasion in 2 Corinthians 8–9," *JGRChJ* 6 (2009): 107–27. According to Jennings, "By failing to be . . . obedient in giving to the collection, the Corinthians would be violating the social cohesion of this patronal network" (113). For a general overview, see Neyrey, "God, Benefactor and Patron," 465–92; and esp. DeSilva, "Patronage and Reciprocity," 32–84.

66 Joubert, *Benefactor*, 138 states that the Christ-gift "places all believers in debt" to God. Paul, of course, does not say this; in Paul's interpretation, giving is less in response to debt than it is the natural action of the person reconstituted in Christ. However, Joubert's point is well taken; Paul reshapes ancient reciprocity around the Christ-gift rather than somehow "transcending" it. Young and Ford, *Meaning and Truth*, 178 capture this point, even if it is somewhat overstated: "In the face of what this God gives, calculations of reciprocity are pointless: one simply gives freely in the spirit of the God who does likewise." But see also 179: "Vis-à-vis Hellenistic reciprocity, what seems to have happened is that the inexhaustible generosity of God places everyone in the position of his clients and therefore owing him thanks; but among the clients themselves there is no basis for anything other than equality or uncalculating generosity, and so all patron-client relationships are relativized." Or as S.C. Mott, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change* (2nd ed.; Oxford: OUP, 2011), 27 states, "The benefactor's *charis* is a gift; the recipient's *charis* is gratitude. But we have more than reciprocity. Grace in these chapters remains God's power. God's grace flows into them and emerges as their grace toward the poor."

gift-giving. Both sides of this dichotomy can be seen clearly, and the paradox (for us, not Paul) is that they do not stand in tension.

The example of the Macedonians illustrates the freedom of giving that should characterize believers. They gave "of their own volition" (αὐθαίρετοι), begging Paul for the χάρις and κοινωνία of ministering to the saints (8.3–4). Thus, Paul advises the Corinthians to give "each as he has decided in his heart, not grudgingly or from necessity" (μὴ ἐκ λύπης ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης; 9.7).[67] Paul wants to make clear that he is not forcing the Corinthians to give: in 8.8 he states, "I am not speaking in the manner of a commandment" (οὐ κατ᾽ ἐπιταγὴν λέγω), and in 8.10 he says that he is giving his "opinion" that it would be beneficial for them to give. The Corinthians *should* give without goading, for "God loves a cheerful giver" (ἱλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός).

Paul reminds the Corinthians of their promise to give, which provoked the Macedonians to their own generosity (9.2).[68] The Corinthians should now fulfill (ἐπιτελέω)[69] their original promise by connecting their "willing" with "doing" (8.10–12). Being gifted by God, the Corinthians abound in faith, speech, knowledge, zeal and love for Paul and his companions; consequently, they should also abound "in this gift" (ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε; 8.7). However, to put further pressure on the Corinthians, Paul reminds them of the potential shame hanging over his head until they give. If they do not give, Paul's boast about them would be in vain (9.3–4). The final point Paul makes in this regard is one of obedience. If the Corinthians prove themselves in this ministry, others will glorify God because of "the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ and generosity of community" (ὑποταγῇ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ

67 As Jennings, "Patronage and Rebuke," 117 notes, "There existed an interesting tension in that even though grace was an act of expected reciprocal exchange, it also required no hint of obligation in order to maintain its essence as a virtue." Consequently, Harrison, *Grace*, 313 might be too strong in saying that "[p]erhaps Paul's secret fear was that the Corinthians might ultimately . . . fulfill their promised contribution, not because of any sense of gratitude for the divine grace revealed in the impoverished Christ (2 Cor 8:9), but more due to the silent demands of the Graeco-Roman reciprocity system."

68 Harrison, *Grace*, 312 draws attention to Dio Chrysostom's *Or*. 40.3–4: ". . . For there is nothing more weighty, no debt bearing higher interest, than a favor promised. Moreover, this is the shameful and bitter kind of loan, when . . . because of tardy payment the favor turns into an obligation . . . For nothing has such power to remind those who owe you such obligations as your having utterly forgotten them."

69 On this term, see R.S. Ascough, "The Completion of a Religious Duty: The Background of 2 Cor 8.1–15," *NTS* 42 (1996): 584–99 who suggests that ἐπιτελέω was used in the context of religious duty, which is important for how Paul displays the collection not as an "administrative task."

εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἁπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας; 9.13–14).[70] This tension (from our view) is helpfully summarized in Paul's note that he sent the brothers to arrange their gift—thus, they had to give!—so their giving would be "as a willing gift, not as an extraction" (9.5).

The actions of the Corinthians affect others: their promised giving provoked the Macedonians to give,[71] their potential unwillingness to give could shame Paul, and their eventual giving would aid the saints. Consequently, Paul urges the Corinthians to give in a manner that neither allows them not to give (they need to give) nor forces them to give (they need to give *willingly*). This is the simple shape of all gift-giving relationships in antiquity: all gift-giving contains this tension, the non-legal obligation that arises and exists within prior relationships. Yet, another—more significant—part of this tension between freedom and compulsion, and therefore obedience itself, results from Paul's understanding of human giving. Receiving the gift of Christ, and therefore existing in Christ, reconstitutes and enables a person to give; not giving is inconsistent with one's identity in Christ.[72] The character of gift-giving should be a kind of unprovoked giving, stemming from God's giving to the unworthy. Hence, where we see a tension between Paul rhetorically and theologically coercing the Corinthians to give and an ideal of freely giving, Paul—and his contemporaries—saw no tension. The rules of ancient benefaction apply, except here the relationship with Christ also enables giving and provides its distinctive shape, which necessarily modifies the benefaction system.

3.3 *What Does Human Giving Accomplish?*

As Paul assures the Corinthians, they do not give to be thrown into θλῖψις and the saints into rest; rather, their giving is for equality (ἰσότης).[73] While the

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70 Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 122–23 argues that ἡ ὑποταγὴ τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν should be interpreted as "the donors have entered into a contractual agreement (ὁμολογία) by means of their donation, the substance of which is their submission (ὑποταγή) to Jerusalem." But see Thrall, *2 Corinthians VIII–XIII*, 598–90 who maintains that the evidence favors viewing ὁμολογία as "confession."

71 On the potential rivalry between the Corinthians and Macedonians, see Harrison, *Grace*, 314–21, who argues that Paul "promotes a rivalry in beneficence . . . by employing the zeal terminology of the honorific inscriptions" but without using "the inscriptional terminology of competition." See also Joubert, *Benefactor*, 173–76.

72 Thus, Barclay, "Circulation of Grace," 420: "The Corinthians are being invited not just to imitate God's dynamic of grace toward the world but to embody it, to continue and extend it in their own giving to meet the needs of others."

73 As Ogereau, "Collection," 365–66 argues, Paul's notion of equality is seen in his use of Exod 16.18, where, in its original context, the issue is "proportion to [one's] need." Thus, not a

Corinthians currently have an "abundance" (περίσσευμα), the saints have a lack (ὑστέρημα). The abundance meets the lack, and equality results. When the situation is reversed the saints will likewise give from their abundance (8.14b).[74] Since God was the source of the gift, when the Corinthians would give to the saints a hierarchical relationship was not created but one of mutuality and interdependence where each gives to fulfill a need (8.13–4). However, where we would expect for the saints to reciprocate to the Corinthians for their gift, such is not the case.[75] The saints would indeed "long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you" (9.14), but they would not reciprocate materially—what could they give? The normal cycles of reciprocation are necessarily modified here: God provides for the Corinthians who can then give to the saints, who give thanks to God, but do not give to the Corinthians (cf. 9.11–14). Gratitude, however, constituted a form of reciprocity, and Paul states that the Corinthians would further be "enriched in every way for all your generosity" by God (9.11). All gift-giving cycles in which humans participate come from, through, and to God; no step occurs independently.

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strict leveling of resources, but a "relative, proportional equality by restoring a certain balance between need and surplus." Cf., somewhat similarly, L.L. Welborn, "'That There May Be Equality': The Contexts and Consequences of a Pauline Ideal," *NTS* 59 (2013): 73–90.

Philo's understanding of equality can make for an interesting comparison with Paul. H. Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief* (reprint; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 259 proposed that Paul and Philo drew on the same tradition, since, for example, they both used Exod 16.18 to explain ἰσότης (cf. *Her*. 191; 2 Cor 8.15); on the use of this text in Philo and Paul, see Barclay, "Circulation of Grace." Where Philo reads Exod 16.18 as evidence of God's providential ordering for equality (each receives what is appropriate), Paul transforms the verse into a statement about how "the one who has much" and "the one who has little" are related in *giving*. As Barclay states, "Paul appears to have combined with the manna narrative, or superimposed upon it, a model of gift exchange and mutuality in surplus distribution that is *not* already implicit in the text but is brought to it from elsewhere, apparently from his understanding of the Christ event and its social implications" (413). Accordingly, the attempt of Georgi, *Collection*, 84–92 to read a Philonic concept of ἰσότης into Paul, such that ἰσότης is a circumlocution for God, has not been received well by commentators.

74 As D.J. Downs, "Redemptive Alsmgiving and Economic Stratification in 2 Clement," *JECS* 19 (2011): 499 notes, it is inappropriate to read Rom 15.26–27 into 2 Cor 8–9; in the former text, Paul speaks of an exchange of material goods for spiritual blessings, while in the latter, "Paul envisions a situation in which the Corinthians might someday require financial assistance from believers in Jerusalem." On the collection in Romans 15, see further D.J. Downs, "'The Offering of the Gentiles' in Romans 15.16," *JSNT* 29 (2006): 173–86.

75 See Barclay, "Circulation of Grace," 422: "the language of debt and obligation is completely absent here, and in its place is a system for the *mutual sharing of surplus*."

But if the Corinthians give to the saints in Jerusalem but the saints do not give back, what sort of relationship is there? This one-way leveling of surplus and lack does not necessarily create any long-lasting connection. The three-way movement from God to the Corinthians to the saints (and back to God) needs also to run from the saints to the Corinthians. Paul makes it clear that this is indeed the case: in the Corinthians' gift the saints glorify God because of the "generosity of [your] contribution" (ἁπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας) which was given "for them and for all." Although the perhaps dominant understanding of κοινωνία views it as a reference to a concrete monetary contribution,[76] Ogereau, following on the work of Peterman,[77] shows that it never means concrete monetary contribution.[78] Rather, as Ogereau states, κοινωνία means "some kind of partnership or association with socio-political ramifications," which would result in financial contributions.[79] Thus, in essence, it points to the "fellowship" caused by the gift. Immediately after this phrase, Paul explains how this κοινωνία is also upheld by the saints: they pray for the Corinthians and long for the Corinthians on account of God's gift which was given to the Corinthians (9.14). Additionally, the Corinthians' generosity will eventually result in a counter-gift from the saints to assist the Corinthians, if this is ever needed (8.14). This gift-giving thus creates relationship and strengthens ties, while also serving the ends of worshipping God. Accordingly, "Paul's rhetorical appeal to ἰσότης and κοινωνία . . . suggests that he had very concrete objectives in mind. His intentions seem to have extended beyond the mere alleviation of poverty by means of charitable giving. Indeed, he appears to have aimed at reforming the structural inequalities of Graeco-Roman society that were also becoming apparent in the early church, by fostering socio-economic ἰσότης between Jews and Gentiles and by establishing a global, socially and ethnically inclusive κοινωνία among them."[80]

3.4 *Giving as/and Thanksgiving*

As noted above, human giving also effects thanksgiving to God. In 9.6–15, Paul brings to the fore the place of thanksgiving in gift-giving. Thanksgiving is a result of receiving from God as well as receiving gifts from God through humans.

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76 This has been the case, with regard to Paul, since esp. H. Seesemann, *Der Begriff KOINΩNIA im Neuen Testament* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1933).

77 G.W. Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi: Conventions of Gift-Exchange and Christian Giving* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997).

78 Ogereau, "Collection," 368.

79 Ogereau, "Collection," 371.

80 Ogereau, "Collection," 377.

In 9.11, Paul states that God is "in every way enriching" the Corinthians "unto all generosity," which is, of course, for the purpose of contributing to the needs of the saints. But their generosity has another effect: it "produces through us thanksgiving to God" (κατεργάζεται δι᾽ ἡμῶν εὐχαριστίαν τῷ θεῷ).[81] The "us" here is undoubtedly Paul and his co-workers in the collection, and through them the Corinthians' generosity results in thanksgiving. Likewise, in 9.12, Paul states that the collection not only fulfills the needs of the saints, but also "abounds through many thanksgivings to God" (περισσεύουσα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστιῶν τῷ θεῷ; cf. 4.15). Material giving is intimately linked to thanksgiving, as the former results in the latter. In a related manner, Paul remarks that the Macedonians gave *themselves* first actually to God and Paul and his coworkers: "their surprising generosity is a direct result of their dedication of themselves to the Lord."[82] Thanksgiving is not only the proper response to God's giving, but seems to be, for Paul, coterminous with human giving. Every act of giving issues in thanksgiving to God, and every act of giving is predicated on a prior thanksgiving for God's gift. Accordingly, it is unsurprising that the passage ends with thanksgiving for God's "indescribable gift" (Χάρις τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ; 9.15).[83]

3.5 *Conclusion*

For Paul, God's gifts not only generate communities but bind them together, the latter specifically by enabling humans within those communities to give to one another and to those in other communities.[84] Human giving meets the needs of others and upholds community, as all meet together in thanksgiving through participation within the divine gift economy. Pauline communities are established and defined by God's generosity, with each individual member receiving gifts and thus being enabled to give.

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81 Cf. Downs, *Offering*, 143: "What is striking about 2 Cor 9.11–12 is . . . [Paul's] affirmation of God as the sole object of thanksgiving. . . . one would perhaps expect Paul to remind the Corinthians that their support of the offering for Jerusalem will result in 'thanksgiving to you.' "

82 Barnett, *Corinthians*, 399. As Thrall, *2 Corinthians VIII–XIII*, 526 notes, the emphatic position of ἑαυτούς in 8.5 suggests that πρῶτον contrasts the Macedonians' giving of themselves *before* their material giving, rather than their giving to God *before* Paul.

83 Hence, Jennings, "Patronage and Rebuke," 119 states that "Paul comes extremely close to Sophocles' maxim in 2 Cor. 9.15"—"Grace is always giving birth to grace" (*Ajax* 522).

84 Cf. Mott, *Social Change*, 27: "God's benevolent act does not merely 'inspire' the response, it actually creates the ability to respond—it is both the reason and the power for the response."

Three interesting points of contact with Philo now come into view—on human giving, thanksgiving, and community—and the rest of this chapter will clarify further the positions of Paul and Philo through comparison.

4 Philo and Paul

4.1 *Human Giving*

For Paul, human giving follows straightforwardly from divine giving.[85] For Philo, human giving can be a theological problem when placed in relation to divine giving.[86] As Philo remarks, "it is the most appropriate work for God to give benefits, and for created beings to give thanks" (οἰκειότατόν ἐστιν ἔργον θεῷ μὲν εὐεργετεῖν, γενέσει δὲ εὐχαριστεῖν).[87] Humans cannot truly give because all things are God's; they can only give thanks. This problem arises particularly when Philo thinks explicitly about God's "most appropriate" work being gift-giving. *Cher*. 120–123 provides an example of this extended logic.[88] Philo explains that when humans are compared to each other, they are all equally citizens of the earth; but God views them as visitors, whose brief time on earth is a divine gift. That God is the only true citizen (μόνος κυρίως ὁ θεὸς πολίτης ἐστί) is an "exceedingly wise dogma" (δόγμα πάνσοφον). Only by a misapplication of terms (κατάχρησις) are humans called citizens vis-à-vis God. The same is true of typical human interactions that pose as gift-giving: "all who are said to give (χαρίζομαι) are actually selling (πιπράσκω) rather than giving gifts (δωρέω), and those whom we think to receive gifts (λαμβάνειν χάριτας) are in truth buying (ὠνέομαι)." Since the sellers are looking for repayment though "praise or honor," they are actually "seeking a return for the gift" (ζητοῦντες χάριτος ἀντίδοσιν); consequently, the exchange is a gift only in name, while the essence is a sale. Likewise, the recipients of the gifts "pay back by repaying at the right time" (ἀποδοῦναι καὶ ἐπὶ καιρὸν ἀποδιδόντες), and thus they are purchasers.

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85 Cf. Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and The Trinity*, 70: "Our agency is part of the gifts God gives in imitation of God's own dynamic life."

86 Accordingly, although the issue of human generosity was raised in chapter 1, section 3.1.1, I reserved fuller discussion until now because 1) Philo's position comes out most clearly when compared to Paul; and 2) unlike Paul, human generosity is not an essential facet of Philo's concept of gift-giving. Therefore, this discussion could be detached from the Philo chapters.

87 *Plant* 130.

88 See also *Migr*. 40.

In contrast, Philo says "God is not a cheap market seller, but a giver of all things (δωρητικὸς δὲ τῶν ἁπάντων), pouring forth everlasting springs of gifts (ἀενάους χαρίτων πηγὰς ἀναχέων), not desiring recompense. For he is neither needy nor is any created thing able to repay him a gift." God does not sell because God is one who gives: the distinction between giving and selling allows Philo to define God's nature as a giver in opposition to humans, because God is a perfect being who needs nothing but rather has everything and thus gives without thought of receiving anything back. Philo is thus more anxious than Paul to preserve a gap between God and humans—in causation, in resources, in quality of giving, and so forth. He wants God's agency always beyond, and before, human agency. This transcendence/difference represents a philosophical anti-Stoic anxiety to keep God separate from the world and humans. Accordingly, God does not "hawk his wares" (ὁ θεὸς οὐ πωλητὴρ ἐπευωνίζων τὰ ἑαυτοῦ κτήματα) like humans, but is a gracious fountain pouring forth unending gifts. Humans are not givers because they always stand in need of something else. Thus, when it is said that humans "take and give" (λαμβάνομεν καὶ δίδομεν), Philo believes it is accurate that we *take*, but that we *give* is said only by a "misuse of language" (καταχρηστικῶς).[89] Properly defined, giving is an action allocated to God exclusively such that humans cannot be said to give.[90]

This logic suggests a straightforward contrast with Paul: for Paul, humans can give because God gives, for Philo, humans cannot give because God gives. But Philo's thought is more nuanced than that—and necessarily so, because humans, in practice, *do give* and, according to Law, *should give*. What seems inconsistent—humans cannot give, but they do give—can be presented in a consistent manner, leaving us with an interesting, if less straightforward, comparison with Paul.

Philo speaks of human gift-giving positively for two main reasons. First, and perhaps shockingly, humans imitate God by giving.[91] As Philo remarks,

89 *Her*. 124.

90 Harrison, *Grace*, 131–32 makes much of Philo's "unabashed criticism of an institution which was viewed in a positive light." While I agree that Philo does negatively portray the benefaction system here, I am not claiming that Philo is merely critiquing it because of its understanding of reciprocity. For Philo, the major problem is not reciprocity but that humans, vis-à-vis God, are unable to give gifts. Thus, their activities that pose as gift-giving are not actually so. In this sense, Philo is not simply trying to purify gift-giving by removing reciprocity but making an anthropological statement.

91 Humans resemble God as givers clearly in the parent-child relationship. Although God is the ultimate cause of childbirth (e.g. *Congr*. 130; *Deus* 5–7), parents should be honored as "representations and imitations of divine power" (ἀπεικονίσματα οὗτοί γε καὶ μιμήματα θείας δυνάμεως), for they have "brought into existence things that did not exist" (τοὺς μὴ

"humans never more closely resemble God than in giving" (παραπλήσιον οὐδὲν ἄνθρωποι θεῷ δρῶσιν ἢ χαριζόμενοι). What could be better than for humans to "imitate the eternal God" (μιμεῖσθαι θεὸν γενητοῖς τὸν ἀίδιον)?[92] Consequently, the prosperous should not hoard their wealth but ease the "hard life of the needy." All should "honor equality" (ἰσότητα τιμήσας);[93] indeed, those who have "drunk from the fountains of wisdom" have banished envy from their spirit, and therefore they look favorably on those who are well off and act beneficently towards those in need. If God is gracious to humans, despite their inferiority, Philo asks why we should not act the same way to those who come "from the same elements" (ἀπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν στοιχείων) as us?[94] God has provided humans with life as a gift, and humans should therefore use their life to live in communion, harmony, equality, philanthropy (κοινωνία, ὁμόνοια, ἰσότης, φιλανθρωπία), and every other virtue.[95]

Virtuous humans also serve as vehicles of divine giving. The "just man" is the "prop of the human race," because he uses all of his possessions for the benefit of all (ὅσα μὲν αὐτὸς ἔχει. . .ἐπ᾽ ὠφελείᾳ).[96] He is a gracious giver, and if he lacks something, he supplicates God who "opens heaven" to overflow gifts, which are then spread abroad. To the virtuous man God gives gifts and because of him God gives to others (δι᾽ αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἑτέροις εἴωθε χαρίζεσθαι).[97] As channels for divine giving, humans have to follow particular rules in giving. Anything a person receives from another person has to be attributed to God.[98] Furthermore, humans should give only what the person needs, and nothing more or different: "the quantity in gift-giving is defined by proportion" (τὸ ποσὸν ἐν ταῖς χάρισιν αὐτῷ παρείληπται διὰ συμμετρίαν).[99] You do not give oars to a farmer or a plow to a sailor; rather, as God gives suitable gifts to the deserving, so also humans give what is needed to the worthy.[100]

ὄντας εἰς τὸ εἶναι παραγαγόντες; *Spec.* 2.2–3). They are benefactors and rulers appointed by nature (ὡς εὐεργέτας καὶ. . .ὡς ὑπὸ φύσεως κατασταθέντας ἄρχοντας). Parents cannot be properly thanked nor repaid, but they should receive gratitude and honor. Those who withhold gratitude are unworthy (*Spec.* 2.234).

92 *Spec.* 4.73–75. Cf. *Virt.* 166–70.

93 See also *Spec.* 2.204.

94 *Spec.* 1.294–95.

95 Cf. further esp. *Contempl.* 16.

96 *Migr.* 121; see 120–27.

97 *Migr.* 127.

98 Cf. e.g. *Ebr.* 106–07.

99 *Post.* 142.

100 Indeed, giving to unfitting recipients can be harmful to the giver; cf. *Legat.* 60; *Ios.* 99.

Second, humans should give because the Law commands it. When Philo expounds the Law in *Virt*. 80–90, after having proved the φιλανθρωπία καὶ κοινωνία of Moses, the first Law Philo explains is the one against usury, for one should not receive "offspring" from money. But this does not mean people should be slow to give to those who ask (χαρίζεσθαι τοῖς δεομένοις). Instead, rather than receiving interest from the loan, repayment comes in the form of gratitude. If this makes a person unwilling to give (εἰ δὲ μὴ βούλοιντο δωρεῖσθαι), they should at least still lend (κιχράναι γοῦν) without expecting anything beyond the principal. This admonition allows the poor not to become poorer and keeps the giver from injustice. Compared against virtue, even the richest ruler seems poor, and in this respect Philo says we should look upon the riches of moneychangers and usurers as poverty. This is the inverse of Paul in 2 Cor 8–9, where generosity is "wealth." For Philo, possessions are important, but riches without virtue count for nothing; riches with virtue result in charity. Those under the Mosaic Law must avoid usury and uncharitable ways.

Philo remarks elsewhere: "Is it not right, then, to love these laws, which are full of such great mercy? By them rich people are taught to impart and share what they have, and the poor are comforted."[101] Some Laws admonish those who received gifts to make recompense for the gifts (εἰς χαρίτων ἀμοιβάς), and those who have given gifts not to seek restitution as if they had given a loan.[102] On the seventh year the Law ordains a remission of debts (χρεωκοπία), which helps the poor and summons the rich to philanthropy (τοὺς πλουσίους ἐπὶ φιλανθρωπίαν προκαλούμενος).[103] The rich give from their abundance to those in need, looking forward to the potential time that they may be in need and receive from others (cf. 2 Cor 8.13–15!). Even the created order demonstrates the virtue of giving: the sun gives light to the moon, which then has its own beauty to display—a clear teaching on kindness and philanthropy (διδασκαλία χρηστότητος καὶ φιλανθρωπίας).[104] In imitation of the heavenly bodies, humans should not grudge to give to those who are deserving (χαρίζονται τοῖς ἀξίοις). Those who "show mercy to the poor" (πένητας ἐλεῶν), "give benefits to friends" (φίλους εὐεργετῶν), and those who "pay attention to the common rules of justice towards all humans" are pleasing to their fellow humans as well as God.[105]

101 *Spec*. 2.105–07.

102 *Decal*. 167. Cf. also *QE* 2.3.

103 *Spec*. 2.71–78.

104 *Spec*. 2.141.

105 *Mut*. 40.

There is ample evidence in Philo's writings that humans should give to imitate God and follow the Law.[106] Naturally, these are really a single motivation. The Law commands that humans imitate God in giving because the Law is the instantiation of God's will in creation. Appropriately, being beneficent is perhaps the utmost way in which humans live in accordance with the Law-sustained order of the cosmos, and therefore imitate God. God does not give gifts to humans for their exclusive possession, but so that they might invite others also to enjoy them.[107] Progress in virtue means also growth in charity. Accordingly, humans are expected to give to the poor around them, as an ethical duty central to their piety. Where Philo can sometimes see God's exclusive ownership of all things as problematizing human giving,[108] it can also provide an impetus for holding one's gifts with a loose grip.[109] Giving is linked to piety, and therefore when one gives, one may receive back from the recipient, but the rewards one receives from God are greater. But, again, insofar as God himself is the perfect giver, humans cannot actually give but rather they do something that is analogous to giving. Thus, the tension: humans should give because God gives and commands giving, but God's giving is so perfect that it is incomparable with human giving, in reflection of the gap between the transcendent God and earthly creatures. Philo's insistence that human giving vis-à-vis divine giving is not actually giving is only a way of stressing the perfection and uniqueness of God's generosity. Everything *always* has to be set in the context of God's ultimate causation of all things.

Accordingly, the contrast between Philo and Paul is not as simple as originally stated. For Paul, human giving takes its distinctive shape from Christ's giving: the ultimate instance of divine generosity is at the same time the ground, motivation, and blueprint for human giving. Humans can give because God gave, and they should give because giving is part-and-parcel of their reconstituted existence in Christ. Divine giving creates humans as givers; and in this manner, human giving cannot be pitted against divine giving, because divine giving enables and works in human giving.[110] In this sense, we might say that

106 For further discussion, see, e.g., *Mos*. 1.133; *Spec*. 2.80–85; on Moses, *Mos*. 1.51–60; 2.242; on Abraham, *Abr*. 175–77 (cf. *Ios*. 229–31), 273; on Joseph, *Ios*. 45–46, 99, 157, 240–41, 249; *Legat*. 158, 268, 287; *Flacc*. 61; *Praem*. 97. See also *Mos*. 2.233–42, which can make for an interesting conversation partner with Romans 4.

107 See also *Fug*. 28–29.

108 As in *Cher*. 120–23.

109 *Her*. 103–05.

110 On this theme, cf. esp. Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity*, 67–95. For the non-competitive relationship of divine and human agency, see the longer discussion in K. Tanner,

the "location" of the giver is fundamental to the difference between Philo and Paul. Whereas Philo must stress the transcendent gap between God and humanity, Paul does not share this concern, but in fact wishes to stress the co-location of divine and human gifts without collapsing the difference between them. He achieves this through viewing believers as reconstituted in Christ, existing within the gift, indwelled by God's own Spirit; and therefore human existence is defined by gift and is reshaped to be Christ-like in generosity. For Philo, human giving is a way of reflecting God's generosity and drawing nearer to the transcendent giver, as well as living in line with the cosmos.[111] Because of divine causation—and God's perfect beneficence—divine and human giving can (or must) be pitted against each other, at least occasionally, even though Philo is quick to emphasize that humans can give because God has given (has provided gifts to give) and that is the reason why they should give (the Law). Yet since Philo perfects divine gift-giving—God is the perfect giver who looks for no material return; God is the only one who has something of his own to give—he necessarily critiques human gift-giving in comparison to divine. God is transcendent, his agency is prior to and beyond human agency, his resources are inexhaustible, and the quality of his giving is perfect. Simply put, God is *other* than his creation; and since giving is an activity proper to God, it cannot simply be a proper human activity. The oddity, of course, is that virtuous human giving is caused by God, and therefore the two cannot be played off each other. Thus, when one asks about human gift-giving in Philo, the next question must be: from what viewpoint? By contrast, Paul does not emphasize the perfection of God in his giving (in Philo's sense of perfection) but rather the incongruity and abundance of the gift; thus, he need not critique human gift-giving that springs from that incongruous and abundant gift.

Consequently, for both Philo and Paul, humans give gifts because God gives gifts, but for each the relationship between divine and human giving is different. For Philo God's causation paradoxically both effects human giving and is also the reason why it must be criticized. Philo has to balance the dual issue of wanting to safeguard God's transcendence and difference from

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God and Creation in Christian Theology: Tyranny or Empowerment? (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).

111 Cf. G.E. Sterling, "'The Queen of the Virtues': Piety in Philo of Alexandria," *StPhA* 18 (2006): 123: "The aspiration of Philo was to encounter God directly. Even though a human cannot experience the being of God, it is possible to experience God's presence directly. This experience, even the desire for the experience, affected the moral life. It is not that we imitate God to experience God, but that our understanding and experience of God shape our virtue or impiety."

humanity but also that by progressing in virtue humans become more and more like God. By contrast, for Paul human giving is located with and within divine agency and not in competition to it.

4.2 *Thanksgiving*

A related point of distinction-in-similarity is Philo's and Paul's understandings of how thanksgiving relates to gift-giving. To quote Seneca: "Not to return gratitude for benefits is a disgrace, and the whole world counts it as such."[112] Both Philo and Paul would agree: thanksgiving is a necessary aspect of gift-giving. But the way this relationship is parsed, unsurprisingly, is different.

For Philo, thanksgiving is humanity's proper response to God's proper act of giving.[113] Every human should thank God, in whatever way makes the most sense, for all that God has given: the eloquent person through speech, the philosopher through philosophy, the farmer through harvest, and so forth.[114] Every aspect of life should result in thanksgiving to God.[115] In fact, humans cannot fully give thanks to the God who has created and given all things;[116] yet it remains their duty to bring to God suitable honor in thanksgiving for all things.[117]

How does thanksgiving relate to the specific act of human gift-giving, if at all? One point of relation is that the person who is righteous enough to give thanks to God will not neglect to be generous to those in need.[118] In piety, giving thanks to God and giving gifts to humans in need are integrally related. Thanksgiving is thus related to gift-giving in three primary ways: 1) as a response to God's gifts; 2) in some sense distinct from gift-giving, because giving is proper to God and thanksgiving proper to humans; 3) and yet those humans who give thanks will also give gifts to humans. In any act of human giving, ultimately God should receive thanksgiving as the cause. Philo can both intimately link giving and thanksgiving, as one would expect, while also distinguishing them in an effort to preserve God's perfect beneficence.

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112 *De Ben*. 3.1.1.

113 Cf. *Plant*. 130. Barclay, "Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul," 142: "Philo emphasizes thanksgiving so often that it becomes one of the most characteristic features of his religious philosophy." On this theme, see esp. LaPorte, *Eucharistia*; Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship*, 175–89; also, C.W. Larson, "Prayer of Petition in Philo," *JBL* 65 (1946): 185–203.

114 *Mut*. 219–223.

115 Cf. e.g. *Congr*. 96; *Virt*. 165; *Sobr*. 58; *Spec*. 1.272; *Virt*. 72; *Spec*. 2.180, 187;

116 Cf. *Leg*. 3.10.

117 Cf. *Ebr*. 116–18. On sacrifice, a primary way of thanking God—and of supplicating God for more gifts—see *Spec*. 1.283–85.

118 See *Spec*. 2.171–74.

Since, for Philo, everything is gift, thanksgiving can be rendered for everything; therefore, thanksgiving is a matter of properly perceiving God's causation, of not forgetting God's gifts.[119] Differently, for Paul, thanksgiving is a matter of whether one has received *the* gift. There is a fundamental divide: one belongs to Adam or to Christ, living in the flesh or the Spirit, and so forth. Unsurprisingly, then, a chief mark of sinful humanity in Rom 1.18–21 is that "although knowing God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks (ἐδόξασαν ἢ ηὐχαρίστησαν) to him." For those in Christ, however, thanksgiving is the manner in which they address God: "in all things by prayer and petition with thanksgiving (μετὰ εὐχαριστίας) let your requests be made known to God" (Phil 4.6). Likewise, God's will in Jesus for believers is that they "give thanks in all things" (ἐν παντὶ εὐχαριστεῖτε; 1 Thess 5.18). Paul thus gives thanks for God's gifts (2 Cor 9.15; cf. Rom 7.25), for the gift given to his churches (1 Cor 1.4; 1 Thess 2.13), and for the churches themselves and their faith (Rom 1.8; 16.4; Phil 1.3; 1 Thess 1.2; Phlm 4). Within the church there are different practices of worship but all give thanksgiving (Rom 14.6), and proper worship is important because worship is thanksgiving, and thanksgiving may prompt a response from outsiders (cf. 1 Cor 14.16–18).

As noted above, the generosity God creates in the Corinthians for the collection produces thanksgiving to God through Paul and his co-workers. The ministry itself serves two purposes: fulfilling the needs of the saints and "abounding through many thanksgivings to God" (9.11–12; cf. 4.15). God effects human giving, which results in humans giving thanks to God. Thanksgiving occurs in response to gift-giving and every human gift results in an act of thanksgiving. This is not altogether different from Philo, of course. But the main dissimilarity is that Paul does not find it necessary to distinguish sharply divine generosity from human generosity. Consequently, he also does not worry about the same issues as Philo when discussing thanksgiving; human giving itself effects thanksgiving to God. In at least one place, however, Paul does sound mildly Philonic: in 1 Thess 3.9, Paul asks, "what thanksgiving are we able to render back to God . . .?" (τίνα γὰρ εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι).[120] For Paul, too, there is no thanksgiving worthy of what God has given; but nevertheless Paul, like Philo, still gives thanks.

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119 Cf. e.g. *Sacr*. 54–57; LaPorte, *Eucharistia*, 42–43.

120 Harrison, *Grace*, 270–71 suggests that "the Pauline thanksgivings fall within the ambit of the honorific inscriptions." But one of the differences he notes is that in the inscriptions "the epithets ἀξία and καταξία . . . often accompanied χάρις," whereas for Paul "the return of thanks . . . cannot be measured against the infinite generosity of the divine Benefactor."

Philo's and Paul's understandings of thanksgiving differ as a result of their different views on how divine and human giving relate. Because—at least on a basic level—Philo can put divine and human giving in contradiction at times (when viewing their relation from a particular angle), he does not connect human giving to thanksgiving in a strong sense. Paul, on the other hand, views human giving as an *act* and *cause* of thanksgiving to God. For Philo, the proper work of God is to give and for humans to give thanksgiving; for Paul, the proper work of God is to give and for humans—as recipients—to give and give thanks. The difference should not be pressed too far, because of the reasons noted above; but the basic difference separates Philo and Paul.

4.3 *Gifts and Community*

A final point of comparison is how Philo and Paul relate gift-giving to community.[121] For Philo, the Law clearly commands humans to give to one another, to support each other in need,[122] and to live in harmony and community with each other. Despite his negative statements about human gift-giving, Philo has no desire to contradict the Law on this matter.[123] In fact, Philo can point out exemplary communities where humans live in interdependence and with the shared purpose of pursuing virtue. The Essenes are devoted servants of God who live communally, growing in obedience together through study of the Law.[124] There are no slaves and no hierarchy within the members, because that would destroy equality (ἰσότης). The community shares all property and possessions with each other, and the sick and elderly—those who cannot contribute—are cared for by others. The Essenes are examples of a "practical" way of life and are worthy of praise. Likewise, Philo praises the Therapeutae, who follow the "speculative" way of life, always aiming to see God.[125] They meditate on the Laws and practice virtue all day; but they spend six days in isolation and only come together on the seventh.[126] Like the Essenes, theirs is a simple existence—materially—so as not to interfere with their contemplative

121 For Philo, see esp. the nuanced work of Runia, "The Idea and the Reality of the City," 361–79. Cf. also D.T. Runia, "Polis and Megalopolis: Philo and the Founding of Alexandria," *Mnemosyne* 42 (1989): 398–412.

122 On the theme of human philanthropy in Philo, see van Veldhuizen, "Philanthropia," 112–22; K. Berthelot, *Philanthropia Judaica: Le débat autour de la 'misanthropie' des lois juives dans l'Antiquité* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

123 See e.g. *Migr*. 89–93.

124 See *Prob*. 75–90.

125 *Contempl*. 11; and passim.

126 Cf. *Contempl*. 30.

lifestyle, and they keep no slaves, thinking slavery to be "contrary to nature."[127] Those who serve do so freely, of their own volition. Accordingly, human communities do exist that conform to and embody the Mosaic legislation, and Philo believes these are noble groups.

Yet Philo's desire was often to escape society and to be alone, in contemplation. All evidence indicates that Philo was deeply involved in the political (and social) life of Alexandria,[128] particularly as a representative for the Jewish citizens there.[129] In the social engagement that world entailed, Philo—somewhat spectacularly—reminisced on a time when he was devoted simply to philosophy and contemplation on the world and the things in the world (θεωρία τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ).[130] At that time, Philo feasted on divine thoughts (θείοις λόγοις), never thinking on material considerations. He was wholly consumed by associating (συμπεριπολέω) with heaven and all the universe. Removed from the contradictions, distractions, and evils of normal life, Philo was happy. Unfortunately, the "worst enemy," envy, was waiting for Philo, and it dragged him back into the life of mortals—into the "open sea" of politics. Philo longs for an unexpected time when he might again have respite from the troubles that arise from society. Then he will rise up and float, being carried by the "breezes of knowledge" and escaping his "pitiless masters," by which he means not only his fellow humans but also the affairs that schedule his days. For the time being, he gives thanks to God that he has not drowned.

For Philo, cities in general are disruptive of contemplation and drag one down into vice.[131] Cities are not simply communities, so that the vices of cities can be transferred to communities; but the city is often a petri dish of vice, and the city is where humans live (but not, significantly, the Essenes and Therapeutae).[132] Additionally, when Philo fantasizes about escaping the daily grind—and his dealings with people—he envisions solitude in contemplation

127 *Contempl.* 70.

128 On Philo's politics, see esp. Barraclough, "Philo's Politics. Roman Rule and Hellenistic Judaism," 417–553.

129 Cf. Runia, "Reality of the City," 361: "There can be no doubt that the city occupied a central position in his own life. As an inhabitant of Alexandria he was thoroughly immersed in a highly urbanized form of life." Furthermore, T.E. Phillips, "Revisiting Philo: Discussions of Wealth and Poverty in Philo's Ethical Discourse," *JSNT* 24 (2001): 113: "no debate exists on the question of Philo's economic status. . . . Philo was extremely wealthy."

130 *Spec.* 3.1; see 1–6 for this paragraph.

131 Cf. *Prob.* 63.

132 But cf. Runia, "Reality of the City," 366: "Philo reveals a positive attitude towards the classical Greek conception of the *polis* as the ideal and 'natural' structure for human living, constructed and organized in such a way as to ensure the well-being and concord of its

by himself, not in a community like the Therapeutae.[133] And even further, the Therapeutae, Philo's favorite group, spend most of their time *not* with each other; they are not a community in the typical sense, but more like a collection of individuals.

There is at least an *impetus* towards individualism in Philo,[134] which relates to the way that divine generosity is universalized (everything is gift) and can be perceived as such by all people if only they would utilize their God-given reason. The quest towards virtue is the individual's quest. The teacher of the Law,[135] the fellow Jew who lends to you in need, and so forth, can help you in this quest; but ultimately it is your responsibility. This should not be exaggerated, however, for we have already produced sufficient evidence to demonstrate Philo's belief in the necessity of communities, both hypothetical and actual: almost every negative statement about cities and human society can be matched by an equally positive statement, even if the final analysis has a negative tint.[136] The Law assumes the existence of and need for community, and Philo is not eager to contradict this. In some sense, communities are a necessary hindrance: they are unavoidable, and often those in them can help you on your way. But eventually, escaping from society—whether the city itself, or taking respite from members of your community—is the best thing for your soul. By contrast, for Paul, gifts establish individuals within community,[137] and the function of gift-giving in communities is to build up the community through mutual help by and for individuals. By receiving the Christ-gift, you become a member of Christ's body. No dichotomy between individual and community is sustainable: the gifts and giftings of the individual have a community-directed focus, as each contributes to the wellbeing of the other and the common good of all. The impetus in Paul's theology is thus the movement

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citizens." Yet as Runia notes, Philo understood that there was a considerable distance between the ideal *polis* and what he experienced daily; cf. e.g. *Virt*. 119–20.

133 But see the contrary statement in *Leg*. 2.85.

134 It should be noted that this is not a value judgment.

135 If G.E. Sterling, "'The School of Sacred Laws': The Social Setting of Philo's Treatises," *VC* 53 (1999): 148–64 is correct, Philo actually ran his own school.

136 Runia, "Reality of the City," 377–78 makes the accurate judgment that "the problem is not too little evidence . . . but rather too much. Philo's written remains are so copious that it is easy to make him say whatever one wants."

137 Cf. Sampley, *Moral Reasoning*, 37: "We have no evidence that Paul ever conceived of a solitary, isolated believer. . . . he thinks of believers as called together in Christ. . . . The community is, after all, the matrix within which individual lives of faith are nurtured and maintained."

of diverse individuals into and within community. Accordingly, for both Philo and Paul, gift-giving is a bond of community, and communities are important. But while Philo can imagine an individual's success without community, for Paul the gift can only be experienced—and practiced—within community, in relation to others. For Philo, gifts are indifferent to social structure—one can receive within or without community. For Paul, the gift is structurally social.

5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that in Paul's theology divine gifts create community and form its particular shape; and that these gifts make possible human gift-giving, which functions as the bond of community. In every respect, Christian communities, as the body of Christ, are defined by gift. Accordingly, I then examined how Paul coordinates divine and human giving—particularly how humans contribute to the edification of the community through participation in and imitation of divine giving. To discuss human giving and community in Paul is to discuss divine giving, because human giving is an extension of divine giving, and the sustaining acts of divine and human generosity cannot be separated.

The discussion of Paul set up a comparison with Philo on human giving, how human and divine giving relate, the purpose of thanksgiving, and how giving relates to community. It was demonstrated that, again, Philo and Paul are neither identical nor simply opposites. The difference ultimately lies in this question: What is the most important of God's gifts and what does this gift do? For Paul, it is the Christ-gift, which re-creates its recipients, transforming them into Christ-shaped givers. For Philo, that gift is the cosmos, which has Laws built into its foundation that command generosity. The aim of human existence is to live in accordance with the cosmos, and by doing so, to ascend in virtue. Philo's cosmos and Paul's Christ necessarily lead to different conclusions on who God is and how God acts for humanity, and therefore what humanity is and how it responds.

Conclusion

1 Conversing on Grace

Conceding that neither Philo nor Paul can be present to discuss grace with us, the task of this study has been one of interpreting Philo's and Paul's writings and imagining how such a discussion might go, by pinpointing where Philo and Paul differ and in what ways they do so. My argument throughout has been that Philo and Paul both understand God as one who gives gifts, but their understandings of that divine generosity are different—again, not antithetical, but also not commensurate—because they each understand God's grace as instantiated in radically different ways, in one case, in creation, and in the other, in the Christ-event.[1] In this way, I have sought to contribute to the reframing of the discussion of how Paul relates to Judaism on the topic of grace, by focusing on Paul's relationship to one particular Jewish author.

Throughout the final three chapters of this book I have drawn conclusions about how Philo and Paul relate. What I will do now, then, is summarize the argument of each chapter, and then distill the conclusions about how Philo and Paul relate, in order to bring this work to a close.

2 Summary of the Study

Part One set forth Philo's understanding of divine generosity, which is *cosmological* and *causative*. In chapter one, I argued that the main facets of Philo's concept of God make possible and impel his notion of God as one who gives gifts. When Philo reflects on the question of why God created, his answer is that God is one who gives: he was "good and bounteous" (ἀγαθὸς καὶ φιλόδωρος).[2] Indeed, creating is not simply something God does but is part of who God is. God's perpetual creative activity can never be separated from his generosity: God creates because he is φιλόδωρος and both his creating and giving occur in his beneficent power. Accordingly, as ἴδιον θεοῦ τὸ ποιεῖν, so also θεοῦ τὸ εὐεργετεῖν

1 It should be mentioned again that the assumption of this study has been that Philo's and Paul's theologies of divine generosity were formed not in isolation from but within their social settings and practical purposes. Thus, for Paul, the incongruous shape of the Christ-gift became clear particularly through both his own experience and the fact that this gift was given by the God of the Abrahamic promise to Gentiles.

2 *Mut.* 46.

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ἴδιον.[3] God's nature is thus one of hyper-generosity, and everything is a gift from a God whose generous being overflows into the world like a fountain.

I then traced how Philo makes sense of God as one who gives according to a rational order (giving to the worthy) and incommensurately (according to God's immeasurably generous being). Philo upholds both that humans who are worthy receive gifts from God, but that no human is simply worthy *coram Deo* nor should they consider themselves worthy. What bridges the gap is the belief that God, not humans, constitutes humans as worthy to receive. Such constitutive work is an aspect of God's creative generosity, that God loves to give—specifically for the betterment of humans.[4] Any movement from unworthy to worthy must be attributed to divine grace, because God is the cause of all good things. The asymmetry of the divine-human relationship thus means that God's generosity cannot be explicated by human standards: human worth can be a condition of God's giving, but never its cause. Accordingly, since all good things have their source from this creative divine generosity, God's giving to the worthy is always predicated on a prior creational provision to the unworthy: God's overflowing generosity makes possible his discriminate giving to the worthy.

In chapter two, I focused on how human worth is constituted. I began by arguing for a particular construal of the relationship between divine and human agency that tried to respect that 1) God is the cause of all good things, and 2) humans who do good things are virtuous. Virtuous human agency exists, as it were, within or is constituted by divine agency; accordingly, virtuous human action is, in its essence, the use and enjoyment of divine beneficence. For Philo, the God who graciously created the world has placed humanity within a context ordered for their benefit: Nature, Law, and Logos order the world such that it reflects divine generosity, while also specifying the standards for virtue. Humans who live virtuously are worthy of God's gifts. Yet as Philo makes clear, it is God who gives virtue to humans as well as the love of virtue: "For God caused all virtue to exist."[5] Furthermore, God gives to humans actions in accordance with the virtues.[6] God has thus ordered the human soul such that humans should do good, and virtue results from the congruence of the orderings of the soul and cosmos. Humans as moral agents live in a world woven together with moral fabric. Accordingly, God gives gifts not to those who reject his gifts and choose vice, but to those who are worthy. But as I demonstrated,

3 Cf. *Cher.* 77 and *Mut.* 129.

4 Cf., e.g., *Spec.* 4.187; *Opif.* 23.

5 *Leg.* 3.10.

6 Cf. *Ebr.* 119.

we must let Philo define worth and place it in relation to other aspects of his thought. Worth in Philo's theology is only explicable as an aspect of Philo's theology, not as a preconceived notion that can be applied to Philo. Accordingly, for Philo, life is grace all the way down. The only proper response is faith and thanksgiving, an attribution of all good things to God and not to the self.

Part Two of the book turned to Paul's understanding of grace, which is *Christological* and *creative*. In chapter three, through exegesis of Gal 1–2 and Rom 3 and 5, I traced how Paul identifies divine grace as Christ's death and resurrection for the ungodly, a saving event which effects new creation and new life for its recipients. For Paul, it is key both that the Christ-event is a gift that undercuts any form of social, ethnic, gender, or moral worth, precisely because it goes to the unworthy, a category that, for Paul, encompasses all humans. Thus, as I argued, when Paul discusses grace and justification by faith, his main concern is not ethnocentrism; rather, he sees any obligatory criteria of worth as undercutting the nature of the gospel itself. Paul thus insists that the Christ-gift is χωρὶς νόμου and δωρεάν, given to all without distinction. God does not give Christ in spite of human unworthiness, but because of it. For Paul, divine giving is nothing if not Christological, incongruous to its recipients, and thus excessive. Accordingly, I turned to Rom 4 and 9–11 to explore how Paul understands God's grace when treating persons and histories before Christ. I argued that the Christ-event for Paul is so revelatory and defining of who God is that it becomes a retroactive hermeneutic of incongruity. From Abraham, through the history of Israel, God has given according to a promise that is granted without thought for the recipient's works (Abraham, Jacob), line of descent (Isaac), or ethnicity (Gentiles). The promise takes this incongruous shape for Paul because it was always directed towards fulfillment in Christ. The character of the promise, for Paul, is constant and Christologically explicable. The Christ-gift both effects new creation and patterns history.

In chapter four I argued that three main facets of Paul's understanding of divine gift-giving converge in Paul himself. First, Paul is the paradigmatic unworthy beneficiary of the Christ-gift. Second, Paul understands his apostleship as a gift that is interwoven with the Christ-gift itself. Third, apostolic proclamation is inherent to the Christ-gift itself, as the manner in which the gift is received. Thus, in Gal 1–2 and 1 Cor 15, Paul presents himself as one who was called in grace—re-constituted in the Christ-event—despite the fact that he, as part of humanity under sin, had persecuted the church. Inherent to this call was his apostolic assignment to enact and embody the gospel in proclamation to the Gentiles. Accordingly, Paul's understanding of the gospel he proclaims is rooted in his own story of receiving an incongruous gift that interrupted his life. Paul is both paradigm and proclaimer, and his apostleship exists only in

its relation to the gospel. Then, in relation to 2 Cor 5–6 I focused more closely on the nature of apostolic proclamation as intrinsic to the reception of the gift. The apostle, as God's chosen ambassador, is vital to the logic and outworking of the divine gift: to reject or receive God's gift of Christ is to reject or receive both God and the apostle, because faith comes from hearing.

Finally, in chapter five, I explored what, for Paul, is the result of divine giving: the creation of communities that exist and are sustained by divine and human gifts. For Paul, as for Philo, life takes a particular gift-shaped form; but for Paul this form is that of the justified individual within the body of Christ, while for Philo the gift-shape of life is related to community more ambiguously. Through examining Rom 12 and 1 Cor 14, I demonstrated how Paul understands the body of Christ not only as a community created by divine gift, but also as one that remains sustained in unity through grace. Individual and communal life is defined by receiving and giving gifts (always in that order). And these gifts underscore both the diversity of the body's individual members and their common life in Christ. In 2 Cor 8–9 I then focused particularly on how divine giving enables and funds human giving. Believers give gifts to others as the expression of their new identity and re-constituted location in Christ.

3 Comparative Questions and Answers

We may draw together the main points of the comparative conclusions about Philo and Paul through the following questions:

3.1 *Who is God and What has God Given?*

For both Philo and Paul, God is without question a generous giver. Yet, importantly, they construe God's identity differently because they each look to dissimilar places as the promise of God's gracious being. The questions of "Who?" and "What?" are, for Philo and Paul, inextricable.

For Philo, God is generous because he is Creator, and all of Philo's universal gift-theology flows from that proposition. Created in and as God's grace, the protological order of the cosmos is upheld and supported by God's Logos; in other words, God's first and greatest gift is not only cosmic, but it is also marked by divine order, one which provides the context and matrix for humans to live—hopefully virtuously. Accordingly, for Philo, God is generous, rational and morally explicable, which is reflected in his well-structured cosmos.

For Paul, God is not understood via creation; rather, creation is understood through the Christ-event that effects new creation. As noted in chapter three,

there is a subtle shift of direction in Paul: where Philo places the emphasis first on who God is and then explains what God does, Paul places the stress primarily on what God has done in Jesus. If Philo's God is bountiful, Paul's God has given *this* abundant gift. Both claims—the who and what—are reciprocally influencing, of course, but the distinction is that Philo prizes God's generosity and Paul prizes God's gift. Philo's God is the Creator who gives gifts in and because of his perfection, Paul's God is the one whose power and wisdom are revealed in Christ's death. One raises God's generosity to cosmic proportions, the other claims that the cosmos is undone by a single gracious event in history.

Accordingly, for Philo, creation as an act of divine grace both points to who God is and provides a pattern for his subsequent gifts; for Paul, the Christ-event is not one gift among many but is the ultimate revelation of God's grace, according to which every other gift is understood and towards which every other gift is directed.

3.2 *To Whom has God Given?*

The question of who receives God's grace flows logically from the identity of God and his gifts. As already noted, the temptation is to leave the answer to this question as a stark antithesis: Philo's God gives to the worthy, Paul's God gives to the unworthy. And while this is a true and important antithesis, it does not tell the whole story.

For Philo, human life unfolds in one of two directions: either one enjoys and uses God's gifts and consequently progresses in virtue, or one rejects and abuses God's gifts and consequently lives in vice. The human condition permits each individual to go either way. Yet God gives to those on the path of virtue, for worth is a condition for receiving divine generosity. It is not then the case that human worth causes God's giving, or that God's giving mechanistically responds to human worth. Worth is always subordinate to the priority of divine giving, which corresponds to the asymmetry of divine-human relations: worth is constituted by virtuous living, which is itself caused by God. In any case of divine giving, Philo can probe behind the text to elucidate why that specific person received a gift: and the answer, briefly stated, is that God created the person to be worthy. Thus, to say that God gives to the worthy is to say that God gives to those who have received his gifts, thus upholding a rational order.

For Paul, the question is more straightforwardly answered: God gives to the unworthy. Rom 5.8 may stand as a nice encapsulation of Paul's thought: "But God demonstrated his love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Throughout his letters, Paul is unequivocal about the identity of

humanity outside of Christ: under the power of sin, enemies of God, godless, weak, immoral, and unwise. In a reversal of ancient (and modern) values, Paul claims that God gives to those who do not deserve his gift.

Thus, to the worthy, to the unworthy. There is obviously a discrepancy here. On a basic level, the similarly between Philo and Paul is that both insist humans are utterly dependent on God's grace. The overriding difference is that, for Philo, God gives to those whom he has made worthy, where, for Paul, God simply gives to those who are unworthy. In both cases, God does not give because humans are inherently worthy or lovable; but in each case, God does not give to the same kind of humans. Paul would have found Philo's belief that humans can be worthy through virtuous living detrimental, as it would undercut his notion of gift; Philo would have found Paul's belief that humans cannot be worthy hopeless, as it would undercut the possibility of receiving divine gifts.

3.3 *What do God's Gifts do?*

Again, this question follows logically from the preceding question.

For Philo, following God's paradigmatic gift of the creation of an ordered cosmos, all subsequent gifts bring the worthy recipient further into step with the structures of the cosmos (Law, Logos), so that one becomes virtuous and ascends to the *visio Dei*. That is, God's gifts ground and reaffirm the human recipient in the moral order of creation, creating further congruence between the order of soul and cosmos. Gifts to the virtuous thus empower the virtuous to live—virtuously. Accordingly, God's gifts effect a changed relationship between the human and God (drawing near to God) and among humans (virtue can and should be expressed socially). But as I argued, Philo places the stress on the former; communities can both hinder and help the individual.

For Paul, God's gift of Christ justifies and reconciles the ungodly human and effects new creation, where gift-recipients live a new life in Christ indwelled by the Spirit. The main aspect of Paul's moral vision I examined was his concept of God's gifts as creating communities of individuals who have received the gift of Christ. God's gifts thus effect a changed identity and being in Christ (righteous, new creation) and a new social order (the body of Christ).

In Philo, the worthy become more worthy, and in Paul, the unworthy are remade in Christ.

3.4 *Why are Philo and Paul Similar But Ultimately Different?*

To come full circle: on the one hand, Philo's and Paul's gift-theology are, in many ways, structurally similar because they both stress God's grace to extreme degrees. Philo's God is so gracious that he overflows with gifts, and Paul's God is counter-intuitively and counter-culturally gracious to the ungodly. But they

are different because their understanding of who God is and what God has given is different and irreconcilable. Accordingly, in generalities they are alike; but the particularities of their thought everywhere separate them. They configure divine grace in an incommensurate fashion because each believes God has given different gifts. Cosmos or Christ makes all the difference.

4 In Conclusion: Philo and Paul within and against Paradigms

In the introduction to this study I set forth two different and dominant paradigms for understanding how Paul relates to Judaism on the topic of divine grace. Briefly put: in the first, Judaism is a religion of works and not of grace like Paul; in the second, both Judaism and Paul are religions of grace. What has been demonstrated throughout this study is that Philo and Paul both thought of God's interactions with the world in terms of divine generosity—they both speak of divine gifts frequently and in formally similar ways while making substantively dissimilar theological judgments in the framework of their historical settings and theology. Consequently, Philo and Paul resist simple contrasts, because their relationship fits neither of the paradigms set forth in the introduction. Paul is not different from Philo because he speaks about divine grace, or because he is rather insistent about the importance of grace; Philo does both. Rather, what separates Paul from Philo is his insistence that the event of Christ's death and resurrection for the ungodly is the ultimate instantiation of divine grace in the world, and that from and through this event all reality—including history—is to be interpreted. And what separates Philo from Paul is his insistence that in the act of creation God has established a protological order that makes fitting gifts possible. The lack of simple antithesis or identity presented an opportunity to paint a nuanced, specific picture of one aspect of the Paul and Judaism debate, because, in the end, precisely what separates Philo and Paul are the particularities of their thought and the resulting configurations of grace. Both paradigms make the mistake of not letting Philo define grace on his own terms, which misconstrues his relationship with Paul.

Accordingly, even if both figures speak of divine grace, I have contended that that in itself tells us very little. Paul likely would not have read Philo's writings and thought that he did not believe in grace. Rather, he would have assumed that he was woefully misinformed. Philo's configuration of grace with works and virtue—in the context of divine causation—would have run counter to Paul's belief in the unfitting gift, and Paul's unfitting gift would have seemed to Philo to call into question God's wise ordering of the world. This is not the place to make general claims about Paul and Judaism; rather the claim

is about Paul and Philo. But if Paul and Philo can fit neither of the dominant paradigms for understanding Paul and Judaism, perhaps the paradigms need to be left behind. Paul and Philo both believed that God was a God who gives; but their understandings of divine generosity, while not antithetical, are ultimately incommensurate. The broad space between identity and antithesis is precisely the important terrain that this study has attempted to chart.

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